Truth as an Evaluative, Semantic Property:
A Defence of the Linguistic Priority Thesis

Dphil Thesis

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:……

This thesis is about the relationship between thought and language. It claims that there is a difference of kind between the mentality involved in responding to the world and the mentality involved in reflecting on it. I claim that in order to be able to do the latter one needs to have an understanding of truth. This is because truth is the substantial property that organises language use. I make the further claim that this shows that language is representational, and that truth is the value that a linguistic representation should have. We are then able to undertake reflective thought by using language to represent the way the world strikes us. Reflective thought is then, to borrow Robert Brandom's phrase, a matter of making explicit what we were already thinking. That of course is the interesting bit. I find it both amusing and unsurprising that I should have written a thesis about the problem of coming to clarity about what you are thinking. I am a very excitable thinker, and, despite my best endeavours, I find myself haring about all over philosophical landscape. The end result is a garbled mess. I have been fortunate enough to have met with people kind, patient and clever enough to help me untangle some of that mess. Before launching into the thesis, I want to explicitly thank a few of them.

My chief debts are to my supervisors Michael Morris and Sarah Sawyer. I could not have wished for two better supervisors. They were both ever ready with advice and criticism, and went well beyond any contractual obligations. They both seemed to have the happy knack, although of course there is nothing happenstance about it, of being able to say just what was needed to help me obtain to some level of clarity in my thinking and writing. I can, with a clear conscience, but heavy heart, acknowledge the shortcomings of the thesis as entirely my own. My debt to Michael is perhaps the greater because, in addition to having supervised the thesis, he made me realise that philosophy was interesting, important and exciting.

Not being able to type, I have been ably assisted by a large number of amanuenses. These are, Rose Schreiber-Sainthorp, Lisa Spoor, Katy Owen, Peter Myson, Verity Jones, Tom Swaine-Jameson, Oli Wang, Jane Cleasby, Nathan Towle, Helen Lucas, Alice Cragg, and Rosa Pierce. I have also been supported by numerous friends. Three deserve a special mention. Reuben Lisgarten whose indefatigable spirit is an inspiration, and who regularly dropped whatever he was doing to help me out in a crisis; Elliot Klimek, my housemate, has kept my sane and fed; and Ramona Brunzell,

who, despite hearing that snow is white and that dogs bark more times than is good for any human being, kept coming back, probing, challenging and seeking to understand. She taught me that things are always more complicated than that.

I have been fortunate enough to do my philosophy at Sussex. I have been part of a kind and supportive graduate community. Writing a DPhil has been a difficult and humbling experience. The seas of ideas are vast and I am small. I set out confident and happy in my little coracle. The waves crashed over my head. However, I never felt alone or that I would drown. That the experience has been, by and large, a positive one, I believe, is largely down to the support of my friends. Among them, Andy Rebera, Tom Beament, Chris Allsobrook, Timo Jutten, Tim Carter, Ezra Cohen, Jana Elsen, Christos Hadjioannou, Elaine Finbarr O-Connell, Arthur Willemse, Gavin Osbourne, Dimitri Kladiskakis, Huw Rees, Gabrial Martin, Alex Elliot and Patrick Levy deserve special thanks. All of them have helped me improve my philosophy, but, more importantly, their willingness to support and help each other out created an environment in which the challenge of philosophy was not only worthwhile but fun.

Although the above-mentioned are, I think, exceptional people, it is, in part, because they have been part of an exceptional environment. Philosophy at Sussex is, to my mind, a model of the way the subject should be conducted. Philosophers at Sussex are encouraged to think about what matters, and to undertake those enquiries as part of a collaborative effort. That means to support, criticise and learn from each other with the goal of understanding how things are and what they mean. The lovely thing about Sussex is that everyone, from little to big, is encouraged to take part in that endeavour. Had I not been trained here, I might have been less of a harebrained thinker, but it is more than likely that I would not have studied philosophy at all. My biggest philosophical, and I think personal, debt is to the department, and I heartily thank them all for the education I have received.

In the end, this thesis is for my grandmother, Alice Myer. From as early as I can remember, she has had faith in me. She is an inspiration to me. She refuses to know her place and thinks little of those who do. Despite, or perhaps because of, a lack of formal education, she remains, even in her 90s, a model of an independent thinker who would rather be refuted than refute. She will never read the thesis, but I hope I have done justice to her spirit.

For my grandmother, Alice Myer

Truth as an Evaluative Semantic Property: A Defence of a Linguistic Priority Thesis

Summary

Thinking and using a language are two different but similar activities. Thinking about thinking and thinking about language use have been two major strands in the history of philosophy. One of the principal similarities is that they are both rational activities. As a result, the ability to think and the ability to use a language require being able to recognise and respond to reasons. However, there is a further feature of these activities: we humans are able to have explicit knowledge of how those activities work and what is done by performances in those activities. Thus, theorists face at least two constraints:

1. An account of a rational activity must be compatible with the possibility of agents engaging in that activity.
2. Having described an activity, it must be possible to have knowledge of an activity which is correctly described like that.

There are a variety of accounts of how thinking works and how using a language works, and further variation in accounts of what is involved in explicit understanding of particular performances. These accounts can be distinguished by their views of the nature of the reasons that govern performances in that activity and by their views of the way a description of the activity relates to the way the activity proceeds. I argue that any description of thinking or language use requires showing how the truth conditions of thoughts/sentences are determined, and how the truth values of thoughts/sentences affects the way the activity proceeds. I then argue that in order to have explicit knowledge of what we do, truth has to be a substantial evaluative property of uses of language, and furthermore a truth conditional theory of meaning has to be taken as the description of the rationality of using a language. The big result is that, because in understanding language we understand truth, the philosophy of language is first philosophy.

Table of Contents

Truth as an Evaluative Semantic Property

Introduction

§1 The Problem

Humans have two related but distinct abilities. These are the ability to think and the ability to use a language. I am going to investigate these two abilities with the aim of finding out more about how we stand to the world. I am going to conclude that truth is a substantial, evaluative semantic property. The question which drives the thesis is:

> What does thinking about what is required of an account of thought and an account of language reveal about the nature of truth?

I argue that there are two important constraints, the *practical capacity constraint* and the *explicit knowledge constraint*. The first constraint is imposed because an adequate account of thought must make room for an explanation of our ability to think, whilst an adequate account of language must make room for our ability to make speech acts. That is, an adequate account of thought has to be compatible with an explanation of thinking, and an adequate account of language has to be compatible with an explanation of language use. The second constraint is imposed because an adequate account of thought requires stating what a subject can think and an adequate account of language requires stating what is understood by competent users of a language. In the mental case that requires understanding the contents of possible propositional attitudes and the difference made by adopting different types of attitude to those contents. In the linguistic case that requires understanding the contents of possible sentences and understanding the difference made by presenting those contents with different forces.

One important aspect of both abilities is that they are abilities. That is to say, that to be able to think or to use language is to be able to do something. I will also describe them as practical abilities, as opposed to theoretical abilities, because, I will argue, there is no requirement to have any knowledge of content, however implicit, in order to

possess either ability[1]. In addition, we neither think nor use language in an inexplicable, arbitrary fashion. It is not as if we find ourselves adopting a string of unconnected propositional attitudes, or making an inexplicable bunch of different speech acts. On the contrary, there is a rationale to thinking and language use; what we think and what we say varies with our epistemic state and our priorities[2]. As such we can think or use language well or badly. This being so, any account of thought or language needs to be such that it can make sense of thinking and language use as something that we do, and as something that we can do well and badly. I will call this, "the practical capacity

1 This builds on a distinction of Michael Dummett's. In his essay "What Do I Know When I Know a Language?" Dummett distinguishes between the practical capacity to swim and practical capacity to speak a language (Dummett, 1993, 95-96). With respect to the former capacity he claims that talk of knowledge "only has the force of 'can do it as the result of having learned to do it'" (Dummett, 1993, 96). The latter capacity, he thinks, requires being guided by rules which govern the activity (*loc. cit.*). This, he thinks, requires knowing the rules implicitly. However, by the time of his essay "Language and Truth" (first published 1983) Dummett acknowledges, and seems to endorse, the possibility that "understanding a language does not amount to knowing anything at all, in the sense of knowing something to be the case: it is simply a *practical ability*, namely to use the language and respond appropriately to the utterances of others when couched in it" (Dummett 1993, 132, my italics). He then thinks that one cannot give an account of that practical ability without giving an account of "the large *theoretical component* in linguistic competence" (Dummett 1993, 133, my italics). He goes on to say that "speakers do not normally have such knowledge, explicitly or implicitly: but, by stating what someone would have to know if he were thereby to be able to understand the language, we characterise what it is that a speaker is able to do" (Dummett 1993, 134). The idea is that no knowledge of the content of sentences is required in order to speak a language. Hence, speaking a language is a practical ability. However, giving an account of the ability to use a language requires giving an account of the knowledge that would be sufficient to speak a language assuming one had the relevant practical capacities. I am going to endorse the view that, in the first instance, no knowledge of the content of sentences is required to use language and argue that reflective speakers of a language engage in the philosophical project of giving an account of the ability to use language, and hence come to have knowledge of the theoretical component in linguistic competence. They have both a practical and theoretical ability. The same goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for reflective thinkers.

2 I think that language use is more complicated than thinking. This is because, as I will argue, language is representational medium where as having a propositional attitude is merely to be in an intentional state. This allows us to do more with language, such as write poems, tell jokes, drop hints and so on. Of course, we can do a lot of these things inwardly, but that, I claim, is using language silently rather than adopting a propositional attitude. In any event, I think it is uncontroversial to claim that such complicated activities are solely the preserve of linguistic creatures.

constraint":

> **PCC:** any account of thought/language needs to be such that it can make sense of thinking/language use as a practical ability which can be performed well or badly.

PCC provides a constraint on an adequate account of thought and language. However, we do not merely engage in thinking and language use; we are also able to come to have explicit knowledge of what we think and what we do with our language. That is, as humans we are also able to have explicit knowledge of the contents of our thoughts and sentences. I will reserve the label "grasp of content" for explicit knowledge of a content. This means that there are two levels to thinking and language use. The first level is the practical ability. The second level is theoretical knowledge of the contents of thoughts and sentences. For example, in the mental realm, on a particular occasion, wanting to eat peas and thinking that I have some in my freezer, I might find myself heading there and removing a bag of frozen peas. It may never occur to me that I had any thoughts on the subject. But, on other occasions, I might go through an elaborate menu planning ritual. At this point, I have explicit knowledge of what I am thinking.

I can become even more sophisticated still. I can realise that the components of that thought can occur and have occurred in a variety of other thoughts. I am explicitly aware that the very same component of thought, "peas", occurs in my wanting to have peas and my thinking that there are peas in the freezer. I have a grasp of the thought component, "peas", and the propositional contents of my desire for peas and belief as to their location. This explicit knowledge can be more sophisticated. One example can be found in the work of Christopher Peacocke (1986, 1999). Peacocke develops a theory of what it is to deploy particular components of thoughts and what it is to have particular thoughts. This is not different in kind from explicit knowledge of the contents of one's thoughts. It is a more in-depth development of reflection on the contents of acts of thinking. This claim may seem slightly odd. After all, a theory like Peacocke's is a description of the capacities required to have propositional attitudes, whereas most reflective humans are simply aware of the content of their thinking. If challenged about her rationale, the cook can say, "I thought that there were peas in the fridge". It does not

seem as if she has to have any theory about the capacities required for thinking. That I take the claim to be true is important for what follows.

The reason that I think our naïve cook's understanding is no different in kind from Christopher Peacocke's is that I share with Peacocke the view that thinking is an ability. As a consequence, we both think that an account of what a thinker can do is an account of what a thinker can think. In addition, to specify what a thinker can think, as our naïve cook does, is to specify what a thinker can do. As Peacocke puts it, "a theory of concepts should be a theory of concept possession" (1999, p. 5). To sugar the pill somewhat it may be helpful to note that this constraint is fairly liberal. All it rules out is the idealist conception of thinking as a succession of ideas which, because of their nature as spiritual substance, are understood by their occurrence. The idealist view is ruled out because the central problem is seen as making sense of what it is to understand anything, and the appeal to spiritual substance is seen as a refusal to face up to that problem. However, the constraint is liberal enough to move from a materialism which treats thinking as dispositions to move between states, through a Kantian view of thinking as the ability to combine concepts in judgement, all the way to treating thinking as the ability to grasp thoughts in the third realm.

To make the pill even sweeter I can say the following. The naïve, but reflective, thinker can, not only be neutral about what is involved in thinking, she does not even need to see that there is an issue at all. All that the naïve thinker needs to have realised is that she is recognising and responding to the world. The ability that she is aware of possessing and is characterising in her attributions of mental content is the ability to think. It need go no deeper than that. In a similar way, a mediaeval peasant who is able to recognise that water falls from the sky and can be found in her well need have no inkling of chemical theory. Nevertheless, she has realised that it is the same sort of stuff which is in the well and which falls from the sky. The chemistry of water is a vastly more sophisticated development of that insight.

The claim is central to what follows. The challenge of explicit knowledge is showing how one can even begin to understand the ability to think. By treating all attributions of content as descriptions of an ability, I rule out "introspection" as a satisfying answer to the question of how explicit knowledge is possible. I hope that this is not too controversial. Even if self-knowledge is taken to be a matter of introspection,

then we will still be owed an account of what it is to be able to introspect. That account will have to be a description of an ability, and, more over, such that we can read off from that description what it is to have knowledge of what you are thinking. As will emerge, the central controversy is over whether we need to understand attributions of content as merely indexing mental states, fundamentally characterised as a dispositional state, or whether an attribution of content is an irreducible description of a rational ability.

The linguistic case is similar. One can utter sentences mindlessly or without explicit understanding of what one has done. An extreme, and probably fictitious example, is the Duke of Devonshire who, according to GE Moore at least, gave a speech in the House of Lords while still asleep (Moore, 1959). I admit to occasionally noticing that I have answered a question incorrectly because I have not paid attention to the fact that I am answering a question. I suppose that sometimes I answer questions automatically but correctly, and so never notice that I have been talking. A less extreme example is learning passages by rote in a foreign language and then reciting them. It also seems to me, and this will figure in what follows, that infant language learners try out using words the way they try out dropping their spoon to the floor. In both cases they are trying to see how something works. But that does not imply that infant speakers have explicit (or even implicit) knowledge of what they are up to. However, in general speakers can reflect on what they have said, and are able to paraphrase it or provide elucidations for other speakers. In addition, competent speakers often plot their next linguistic move in advance. We can do all this because we have explicit knowledge of the meaning of our words and sentences. Engaging in the philosophy of language, and beginning to build a theory of meaning for a particular language is, once again, an extreme example of explicit knowledge of a language. But, as in the mental case, explicit understanding of our language and ersatz theorising about it are everyday phenomena. This provides a second constraint on any account of thought and language. I will call it, "the explicit knowledge constraint":

EKC: any account of thought/language needs to be such that it allows for the possibility of grasp of content.

There is a significant difference between engaging in these practices and grasping the content of what is done by practitioners. This is most clear in the case of thinking.

Many non-human animals are certainly engaged in something like thinking. It seems the most plausible explanation of the complex navigational abilities of rodents that they understand their environment and are able to plot a course around it. Those are abilities which require a rudimentary understanding of space and time. Even a cursory amount of time spent in the company of a pet cat or pet dog seems sufficient to want to attribute something like beliefs and desires to them[3]. There is however no grounds for attributing to non-human animals the sort of reflective understanding which would be required to

3 This is not an uncontroversial statement, and even those who are sympathetic to the claim differ on the details. Descartes held that brutes had no mental life (2000, p. 296). (Daniel Dennett takes it that brutes do you have a mental life, but is liberal about what constitutes mentality. He extends it to thermostats (Dennett, 1989, pp. 29-32). Ruth Milikan takes a similar line, but seems to require an intentional state to be part of an inferentially articulated network for it to be a mental state (1989, pp. 294-297). McDowell denies that non-human animals have beliefs at all because they lack the requisite autonomy to respond to reasons. The thought is that to possess a concept one needs to be able to respond to a reason as a reason. But, that requires the ability to represent the world, and representing the world requires explicit knowledge of yourself and of how things are. As a result, only self reflective creatures can possess concepts, and if thinking involves the use of concepts, only self reflective creatures can think (McDowell 1996, esp lecture VI). McDowell, plausibly, takes himself to be following Kant. It strikes me as a good reading of "The Critique of Pure Reason", but the issues are too involved for a footnote. Dummett denies concept possession to non-human animals but allows them mentality (Dummett, 1993, pp. 148-149). As I read Frege and Wittgenstein, they both grant full blown concept possession, but deny much conceptual sophistication. Frege also denies explicit knowledge of content to animals. The dog mentioned at §31 of "The Foundations of Arithmetic" seems to be granted the concept of being a dog and the concept of being a cat, but not the concept of one or of unity. These latter concepts are the product of reflection, and therefore only available to one who has the concept of a concept (Frege, 1980). The dog who opens part II of Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations" can believe that his master is at the door, suggesting that the dog has the concept of his master and the concept of being at the door. The dog cannot believe his master will come home the day after tomorrow, which suggests that some concepts, like the day after tomorrow, are too complex for nonhuman animals (Wittgenstein, 1997, p. 174). Davidson, in "Thought and Talk", grants non-speakers mentality but denies them beliefs or other mental states. I take it he also denies them concept possession. He tentatively suggests that you cannot have beliefs without the concept of belief. I think he reasons that to have a belief one needs to be aiming at truth and that one cannot aim at truth without the concept of truth. He certainly thinks that one cannot have the concept of truth without the ability to understand language use, so non-speakers are also non-believers (Davidson, 2001, 170). At the very end of the thesis I tentatively endorse such a line of reasoning.

have a grasp of the content of mental states. The point is that thinking is something that we do. It does not require any understanding, implicit or explicit, of what is being done. To help keep track of the distinction between engagement and reflection, I will label the former "the ground floor" or "the 0th level", and the latter "the 1st level"[4].

So, the answer to the main question:

> What does thinking about what is required of an account of thought and an account of language reveal about the nature of truth?

will have to be guided by an awareness that an account of thought or language must meet the practical capacity constraint and the explicit knowledge constraint. What I am going to do is show that because any acceptable account of thought or language must meet PCC and EKC, thinking about thought and language reveals something about the nature of truth – namely that truth is, in the first instance, a substantial, evaluative property of sentences.

§1.1 The Problem of Explicit Knowledge

The problem of explicit knowledge is central to the thesis. I want to take some time to motivate using it as a substantial constraint. To have explicit knowledge is to grasp what is said about the world when language is in use and what is thought about the world when creatures are thinking. In the linguistic case, explicit knowledge requires knowledge of meaning and, in the mental case, explicit knowledge is knowledge of what propositional attitudes you and other thinkers can and do adopt. The linguistic case requires understanding both what can be said and the different ways of saying it. As will emerge, that is understanding the force and the content of different uses of language. The mental case requires understanding both mental content and the difference made by adopting different types of attitudes with those contents. Ultimately, I hope to show that it is through coming to explicit knowledge of meaning that we come

4 The justification for my slightly fussy insistence that non-reflective mentality and language use is 0th-level rather than 1st level is to mark just how little is involved in these abilities. In the long run I am going to argue that thinking is intentional but non-representational where as all language use is representational. I am also going to argue that a piece of text or speech makes a variety of speech acts even in the absence of an utterer. It will then be useful to have the ground floor to mark the fact that although language can be used unreflectively what has been done is something at the first level, where as thinking as a response to reasons is at the ground floor.

to have explicit knowledge of the world. The simple thought is that having explicit knowledge of the world requires explicit knowledge of what you believe and know about the world, and that requires explicit knowledge of your mental states. But, as explicit knowledge of your mental states requires explicit knowledge of a language in which you can talk about what it is that you are thinking, it is through explicit knowledge of language that you come to have explicit knowledge of how things are in the world.

The contrast case is with implicit knowledge. When a thinker only has implicit knowledge, then it is able to intelligently get itself around its environment. It has the ability to recognise and respond to what is there in such a way that it is able, when things go well, to get what it wants. However, such a creature has no more than that ability. Even if it can recognise and respond to exercises of its mental abilities, it cannot ask itself, "what is it that I am doing?" To put it another way, even if it can respond to its mental states, and thus, in some sense, think about its thinking, it cannot ask itself, "what is it to think about the world?" The reason is that a creature which has the 'mere' ability to recognise and respond to the world is a creature for which the only notion of error available is not having got what it wanted. It can respond to its response as unsuccessful and, as a consequence, adjust its behaviour. It cannot ask itself, "what did I think?" It cannot ask itself that because it cannot think of itself as recognising and responding to the world. The world is simply that to which it responds. Those responses are successful or unsuccessful. They are not, for the creature, available as a taking of the world. They are available only as (types of) events on a par with any other happenings a creature can recognise and respond to.

My use of the terms is idiosyncratic. The reason is that I want to focus on a problem that I think has been neglected. It is a feature of contemporary analytic philosophy of mind that thinking is treated as a skill. It seems to me that this gives rise to a problem. The problem, put in its most simple terms, is that skills are things that are exercised. You can possess a skill without even being aware that you possess it, and, more problematically for my purposes, even if you know that you possess the skill you may have no idea what it is that you do when you exercise it. Treating thinking as a skill requires treating thinking as an ability to respond to the world. But, just because you can respond to the world in an intelligent way, it does not follow that you can recognise that

you are responding to the world at all, and, a fortiori, it does not follow that you understand those responses as a recognition of some way for the world to be. This is the problem of explicit knowledge.

I am closest to Robert Brandom when he writes:

> At the basic level, the question is how the capacity to entertain principles, and so to know *that* something is the case, arises out of the capacity to engage in practices – to know *how* to do something in the sense of being *able* to do it. What must practitioners be able to *do* in order to be able thereby to *say that* things are thus and so – that is, to express something explicitly?
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> (Brandom, 1998, p. xviii, *italics original*)[5]

However, quite possibly like Brandom, I do not think that the distinction between implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge is the distinction between knowledge how and knowledge that in Gilbert Ryle's sense – Ryle's sense being that knowledge that is knowledge with a propositional content, and knowledge how an intelligently acquired ability characterised in dispositional terms (see, for example, Ryle, 1949, pp. 40-44). Instead I maintain that the ability to be able to do something is, as Stanley and Williamson (2001) argue, precisely a form of knowledge-that. It is to know that taking some course of action is a way of engaging in some activity. What Ryle, Brandom, Stanley and Williamson, and myself all share is the thought that being able to do something, whether that is characterised in dispositional or propositional terms, is a skill. The disagreement is over the right way of characterising that skill. What lies behind the different views is the same. It is a rejection of the view that thinking is a matter of a succession of ideas whose very nature is such that they are private and the having of which constitutes understanding. On the rejected view there is no problem with explicit knowledge. Being minded, on the rejected view, is a matter of there being a succession of these special entities, ideas, and so the having of a succession of ideas is sufficient to have an understanding of those ideas.

Once we reject this view of thinking and replace it with the view that thinking is a skill, we have to face up to the fact that we are no longer guaranteed an awareness of

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5 Where I disagree with Brandom, as will emerge in chapter 4, is that being able to say what you are doing is not sufficient to have explicit knowledge of what you are doing. One needs to understand what you say in a way that goes beyond learning how to use self reflective language in a way that counts as correct by the lights of your community.

what we are thinking when we exercise that skill. Even if we follow Stanley and Williamson and think that Hannah's knowing how to ride a bicycle is a matter of Hannah knowing that [some complex description of what Hannah does when she rides] is a way to ride a bicycle, we have to acknowledge that, although Hannah might be aware that she knows how to ride a bicycle, she certainly is not aware of the complex description of what she does when she rides.

In addition, it is not just complex skills like bicycle riding that have this feature. The know-how/know-that distinction collapses in both directions. Something as simple as knowing that the object in front of you is solid can be treated as knowledge of the proposition that this object is solid, but, without the rejected picture, it is the ability to recognise and respond to solidity. In the first instance, that is, very roughly, a matter of going round rather than trying to go through the object. Something needs to be said about how we move from the abilities to the kind of understanding that the rejected picture was meant to make sense of. For if we are not aware of what we are thinking, then we are not aware that we are thinking about the world, and human beings are very definitely aware that they are thinking about the world. So, for me, implicit knowledge is the knowledge that is had by a thinker who is able to do something intelligently. That can be as simple as recognising and responding to objects, or the more complicated ability to set goals, all the way up to the knowledge that this is the way to play a symphony. The challenge is to show how we can come to think about that knowledge in such a way as to reveal it as contentful thinking about the world[6].

6 It might be worth noting that my use of implicit knowledge does not coincide with treating implicit knowledge as, in some sense, sub-personal and unconscious. Chomsky, at least according to Dummett, uses "unconscious knowledge" in this sense (Dummett, 1993, p. xi). So, we have unconscious knowledge of the syntax of our language, but the knowledge is unconscious because it will never be revealed to us by introspection. I am happy to allow that we can make much of our implicit knowledge explicit by introspection. The problem is showing how we can get ourselves into a position to do that introspection. It might also be worth noting that my use of implicit knowledge does not coincide with treating implicit knowledge as unconscious knowledge, if that is to imply that implicit mental states have no phenomenal qualities. I am happy to think that there is something it is like for the rat to recognise and respond to cheese, and so something that it is like for the rat to have implicit knowledge that there is cheese present. What I wish to deny is that the phenomenal quality of experience is sufficient to bring the world into view. To think so is to fall back into a particularly nasty version of the rejected picture. Phenomenal qualities are not even ideas in the idealists sense. That is, phenomenal qualities do not bring with them understanding by being had. So, to treat the

However, it is essential to the notion of a mental state that it is a response to how things are. Belief are the most straightforward. A belief is a recognition of how things are. It follows that beliefs cannot be understood simply according to their roles in particular undertakings. That is, understanding belief and understanding what you believe requires more than being able to evaluate the contribution made by your mental states to the success of your projects. Grasping the concept of belief requires some other standard of evaluation. If we allow for the moment that what it is for a belief to be correct is no more than what is captured by the following schema:

COR: a belief that p is correct when (it is the case that) p,

then we can distinguish between implicit and explicit evaluation as follows. Creatures who lack explicit understanding cannot evaluate their beliefs as correct or incorrect. This minimal, but pedantic, notion of correctness requires realising that your beliefs are takings of the world as being a particular way. To evaluate a belief according to COR requires knowing what the content of your belief is and what situation it is about[7]. Having that knowledge is to have explicit knowledge.

Whatever notion of truth is appealed to, a belief which meets COR is a belief which is true. If we grant a response which is the implicit recognition that this is how things are the title of belief, then, even on the most minimal notion of truth, the ground floor believer cannot worry about whether or not its beliefs are true. On the other hand, a creature with explicit knowledge is one which has the concept of truth. There is then a how possible question facing any theorist of truth: if truth is as your preferred theory maintains, how is it possible for thinkers to evaluate their beliefs according to COR?

I can put the point like this. Explicit knowledge is that which brings the world into view. A person with explicit knowledge is someone who is aware that they are recognising and responding to the world. That is, they are able to be pedantic. They can care about believing truly. The problem of explicit knowledge is showing how we can

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what it is like of experience to be explicit knowledge requires a commitment to an unexplained ability to understand the significance of your experience through understanding the phenomenal qualities of your experience. But, that is to make the mistake that Ryle railed against.

7 Of course, on some understandings of belief those two bits of knowledge come together. Indeed, it turns out that the problem with deflationary theories is that they treat content as distinct from what a belief is about.

move from an ability to navigate our environment to an understanding of that ability. The challenge is to show how the question of whether or not things are as they are believed to be can become a problem for thinkers.

I will show that it is by coming to understand sentences as representations of ways for things to be that humans are able to gain explicit knowledge. More over, I will show that this requires languages to be constituted by prescriptive rules for making linguistic acts in such a way that truth organises language use, and it is through grasping truth as that which evaluates language use that speakers come to explicit knowledge. All this is a long way off, I first have to put the foundations in place by deflating the deflationary balloon. The pin is the explicit knowledge constraint. I am going to show that the deflationary theorist cannot make sense of our having the world in view. This takes up the bulk of chapters 2 and 3. However, the argument is diffuse, so I am going to summarise it here.

§1.2 What is a Deflationary Theory[8]?

8 Although I hope that my characterisation of deflationary theories is sufficiently broad to encompass the vast majority of what has been passed off as a deflationary theory, there are so many on the market that this claim seems ambitious. What I am more than hopeful about is that my characterisation pins down both the minimalism of Paul Horwich and the pragmatic phenomenalism of Robert Brandom. Horwich and Brandom are what we might call 'thoroughgoing deflationists'. Like all deflationists they think that truth does nothing more than allow us to talk about the world whilst talking about thoughts and sentences. As a result, truth allows us to make claims we have no other way of making, but this is not because gaining the concept of truth gives you insight into anything. Truth is a device, which if grasped, allows you to make and understand generalisations (and, in Brandom's case, make explicit your deontic scorekeeping). Truth is also a semantic notion. So, to be a deflationist about truth is to deny that the concept of truth can be of any use in understanding semantics. What makes Horwich and Brandom thoroughgoing deflationists is that they maintain that what goes truth goes for all other semantic notions, such as reference or F being true of x. They maintain that there is just nothing to be explained about the relationships between words and the world. Instead, they think that languages are used in such a way that there is an interpretation of any language, but providing an understanding interpretations does not require understanding semantic vocabulary. Because concepts and thoughts are about the world, there are the mental analogues of the semantic notions of truth, reference and being true of. The thoroughgoing deflationist also denies that these have any explanatory power or require any explanation. I also want to pin less thoroughgoing deflationists with my understanding. In particular I have Ruth Millikan in mind. I also have success semantics and any kind of functional role theory in my sights. These views maintain that there is

There is a strong equivalence between its being true that p, and p (where 'p' is a sentence in use). That being so any sentence, S, which can be used to assert that p is true if and only if p. This gives rise to the following equivalence schema:

ES: S is true in a language, L, if and only if p,

instances of which pair up names of (indicative) sentences of L with sentences in use that give the contents of those named sentences. This means that truth has a useful, but unusual, function. It serves to allow us to talk about the world while talking about sentences. The very same thing can be asserted by predicating truth of an indicative sentence or by using a sentence which specifies its content. In other words, this function of a truth predicate has two aspects, semantic ascent and denominalisation. The function is useful because there are times when we are not in a position to make a claim in the ordinary way. Instead, we need to refer to a sentence, or sentences, and say that they are true. There are times when you might want to affirm an open-ended collection of claims. For example, an orthodox Catholic might maintain that everything the Pope says, ex cathedra, is true. She could not, even in principle, do that by making every assertion the Pope has made or will make ex cathedra. Instead she needs to make semantic ascent by saying something like, "everything the Pope says, ex cathedra, is true".

All of the above is accepted by everyone (the reason for this emerges in chapter 1). What makes the deflationist unique is that she maintains that there is no deeper explanation of what two true sentences have in common than that they are both true. In other words, you have learned the concept of truth as applied to sentences when you have got to grips with its function as a device of semantic ascent and denominalisation. As a result, she maintains, that ES tells us everything that there is to know about truth as applied to sentences.

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something to be explained when it comes to reference and being true of. As a result, they do think that there is something to be said about what it is for something to be true. What they deny is that the concepts of truth, reference or being true of have any explanatory role. In their views, what one understands are respectable natural scientific properties of words and concepts. The reason I want to call them deflationary is that, for them, understanding the concept of truth is still to have grasped a device of ascent. Understanding the concept of truth still gives you no insight into what it is for uses of language or acts of thinking to be about the world.

Of course, we do not just apply truth to sentences but also to thoughts. But again, because of the strong equivalence between it being true that p and p, there is equivalence schema for thoughts:

ET: the thought that p is true if and only if p,

where, this time, 'the thought that p' is the name of a thought and 'p' is a sentence in use which gives its content. So, truth also allows us to talk about the world by talking about thoughts. We can either give the content of a thought by using a sentence, or we can refer to the thought and predicate truth of it. Truth has the further dual aspect of being a device of mental ascent and denominalisation. Again, there are times when this is indispensable. Somebody might legitimately and truthfully say, "I do not know what it is that Nathan believes but it must be true. There is no other way to explain his success". For the deflationist, truth does not become any more interesting when predicated of mental items. She holds that you have learned the concept of truth as applied to thoughts when you have got to grips with its function as a device of mental ascent and denominalisation. So, according to the deflationist the raison d'être of the concept of truth is to be a device of ascent and denominalisation and there is no more to truth than that.

§1.3 What is the problem?

Deflationists, like everyone else, acknowledge that it is possible, should we wish, to evaluate what somebody claims or what somebody believes according to how things are in the world. COR captures this way of evaluating beliefs. A similar schema will capture the equivalent notion for assertions. But, this sort of pedantic evaluation is possible because beliefs are takings of ways for the world to be and assertions make claims about ways for the world to be. For that to be the case each belief and each claim must be about some way for the world to be. In addition, whatever your view of thought or of language, two different people can believe or assert the same thing. To capture this, you need to appeal to some notion of what is believed or what is claimed and you need a way of describing those things separately from the occasion of belief or assertion. In my terminology, this regimentation is done in terms of thoughts and sentences. At the very least, a thought or a sentence is a posit of a theory about what

someone can believe or claim. In this sense, a thought is what is believed and a sentence what is used to make an assertion. Thoughts and sentences are interpersonally ascribable and also code the intentional properties of beliefs and assertions. As a result, it makes sense to say the thoughts and sentences are about situations even when they are not being believed or asserted.

The notion of "aboutness" is key here. There is a sense in which the problem faced by theorists of language and thought is, precisely, making sense of what it is for a linguistic or mental items to be about something. This problem is the problem of intentionality. Explaining what it is for one thing to be about another is explaining what it is for that first thing to be an intentional item[9].

Aboutness itself is not much clearer than intentionality, so I want to say a little bit about how I am thinking about aboutness. The key thought is that what something is about is captured in terms of evaluation. For example, someone's belief that petunias are flowers is about a way for the world to be, namely that petunias are flowers, but not because it was caused by petunias being flowers. After all almost anything could have caused that belief. Instead, we make sense of the belief as being about that way for the world to be in terms of COR. At the very least, should we choose to be pedantic, it is petunias being flowers that makes someone's belief that petunias are flowers correct. Of course, it is not just particular beliefs that are about ways for the world to be. It makes sense to say that, even if no one has ever believed it, the belief that petunias are dinosaurs is an intentional item. In addition, any propositional attitude of any type is an intentional item, and, as noted above, thoughts, as the possible contents of propositional attitudes, are also intentional items. The same thing goes for sentences and their uses.

9 Of course, some deflationary theorists, notably Horwich and Brandom, also attempt to deflate intentionality. For these theorists, there being a characteristic pattern of deployment for a word or a concept is sufficient for that item to have a referent. The best way of understanding this claim is to take it as the view that there is neither a reductive explanation of any intentional concept nor is giving an interpretation of a language an exercise that requires meta-theoretical semantic notions. In other words, there is no more to any semantic concept than its function as a device of semantic ascent. A phrase like "is true of" allows us to say things like: 'for any predicate, c, c is true of all and only things that are c', but for actual predicates like, "is a dog", all we need is, 'for all x, x is a dog if and only if x is a dog'. The "true of" locution exists because there are as many predicates as there are properties, and that is a pretty large number, if not infinite, of things.

But, although we cannot evaluate, for example, desires in terms of their truth value, we can evaluate them in terms of what would have to be the case for the desire to be satisfied. Similarly, we can make sense of what situation a question is about by making sense of what a true answer to that question would be. The thought is that we can make sense of aboutness in terms of the possibility of using truth as a device of evaluation. The next question is: what does that say about truth? Different forms of Deflationism deny that we need to understand truth to understand intentionality, either because they maintain that there is nothing to understand, or because they maintain that intentionality can be understood in terms of proper or normal functioning. The former option deflates correctness along with truth, and the latter option attempts to explain it in natural scientific terms.

This is not denied by deflationary theorists of any stripe. Because, for the deflationist there is no more to truth than its function as a device of ascent and denominalisation, the explanation of what it is for a sentence or thought to be about the world cannot appeal to the fact that it is true in such and such a circumstance. Instead, thoughts or sentences are about situations, and, as a result, in such situations they are true. Now, the thinker who has explicit knowledge is one who is aware that their beliefs and assertions are true when they capture how things are. That is, they are thinkers who know that they are thinking and talking about the world. In addition, they know what situations they are thinking and talking about. However, if the deflationary theorist is correct, they did not come to that understanding by understanding truth; after all, according to the deflationist, there is nothing to understand. Instead, they had to understand some other property or properties of what they think and what they say. The deflationist is committed to there being these other, non-semantic, properties that both account for the intentionality of thoughts and sentences and explain the possibility of coming to be aware of that intentionality. What I try to show is that the deflationist is unable to meet that commitment.

§1.4 The Argument

The argument against deflationary theories aims to show that deflationary theories suffice only as an account of implicit knowledge. The thought is that

deflationary theories provide a description of what thinkers can do in dispositional terms. It is an explanation in terms of one event (normally) causing another. As a result, a description of what a thinker does has no need of substantial and irreducible intentional vocabulary. Such a description is the description of an ability. It is an account of implicit knowledge. However, it is not a description in terms of recognition and response, but a description in terms of what tends to happen that is then seen to be recognition and response just so long as the subject is located in a suitable environment. This is to say that the fact that mental states are about anything at all requires explanation. That is the sort of explanation that can only be understood by one who already has explicit knowledge. But, as explicit knowledge is awareness of what you are recognising and responding to, deflationary theories are unable to account for such awareness. The simple thought, here, is that deflationary theorists attempt to give a perspective neutral account of language use and thinking, but such a description can only be intelligently given by one who has already understood her own perspective on things. The claim is that truth is the property required to make sense of the fact that you are thinking about the world because it is constitutive of the intentionality of those states that it is truth which organises those responses.

The rough outline of the argument is that treating ES as capturing all there is to truth as applied to sentences means that learning to use a language is no more than gaining an ability. Of course, one who has explicit knowledge of meaning is one who knows what they are doing when they are speaking. That is, they know what it is for their sentences to be true. But, if ES is the beginning and the end of wisdom about truth for sentences, that claim is unexplanatory of what that knowledge consists in. Instead, the deflationary theorist has to think that explicit knowledge is a type of mental state which is not fundamentally characterised as understanding a language, even if, as a matter of fact, those mental states are the states of someone who understands a language. But, a deflationary account of mental states makes the fact that they are about anything extrinsic to what those states are. That a mental state is about anything is, according to the deflationary theorist, a matter of some serious empirical work. But, for that empirical work to be revealing of your access to the world, you need some access to the world in the first place. All the deflationary theorist really offers is a description of complex behaviour.

Why do deflationary theorists have to think that explicit knowledge is not fundamentally characterised as understanding a language? Well, a guiding thought of the thesis, defended in chapter 1, is that the meaning of an expression is that which is understood by fully competent speakers. Now, what is understood by competent speakers is the contribution uses of an expression (tend) to make to what is done linguistically by different uses of sentences which involve that expression. I call that contribution the semantic role of an expression. So, I can put the point like this: fully competent speakers understand the semantic role of each expression in a language, and what an account of meaning aims to capture is the semantic role of each expression in a language. I now use that thought to answer the question at the beginning of the paragraph.

Because deflationary theories maintain that there is no more to truth as a property of sentences than its function as a device of semantic ascent and denominalisation, deflationary theories are committed to it being possible to explain what is done by an expression without reference to truth. In other words, for a deflationary theory, the semantic role of an expression is captured without reference to truth as an evaluative property of language use. Truth does not organise language use, and so use can be described without reference to truth. Instead, the semantic role of an expression is given in terms of regularities of deployment[10].

What does it mean to explain use without reference to truth? The clue is at the end of the last paragraph. The idea is that the role of an expression can be described in

10 It may appear that this does not fit the pragmatic phenomenalism of Robert Brandom. If so, appearances are deceiving. The uniqueness of Brandom's position is that there is no reduction of the normative. But, the deflationary drift of his thought requires that truth talk does no more than register a norm. It is not itself explanatory of that norm. Instead, Brandom's picture is one in which the regularities of use have to be understood in terms of what speakers count as correct. To understand a language is to be able to keep score along with your fellow language users. Truth is meant to be what competent language users use to register the current state of play. So, although it is true that, for Brandom, it is not accidental that speakers aim at truth, what speakers have to understand is not fundamentally described as each expression's contribution to the truth values of sentences in which it can occur. Instead, what is understood are which uses count as correct. There is no deeper explanation of that, and a fortiori, no explanation in terms of speakers grasping intentional properties of sentences. Once again, a use is not correct because it is true, it is correct and so it is true.

terms of some regularity for using that expression. More over, that regularity is not fundamentally described in terms of each expression's contribution to the truth values of sentences in which it can occur. Views that do make the semantic role of an expression fundamentally accounted for in terms of its contribution to truth values are views which treat truth as a substantial property which explains intentionality. Such views make the intentional properties of expressions both substantial and irreducible. They understand language use in terms of its intentionality. On these views, what speakers have to understand are the intentional properties of their sentences, and they do that by coming to understand truth. Deflationary views deny that. They try to find a non-intentionally describable pattern which explains the way an expression tends to be used. They then need a further account of why anything used like that has any intentional properties. Deflationary views divide here as to whether or not there needs to be an account of intentionality, i.e. whether or not there needs to be a reduction of intentional vocabulary to the non-intentional. Horwich and Brandom deny the need for a reduction, redundancy theories maintain it.

By denying that meaning is to be understood in terms of the intentional properties of expressions, the deflationary theorist makes coming to understand meaning a matter of coming to be able to use an expression in accordance with its explanatorily basic usage pattern. It is the ability to use words to make yourself understood. This is implicit knowledge. Somebody who has explicit knowledge is somebody who realises that their sentences are about ways for things to be. That is, ES captures what it is that they understand. However, that understanding cannot be the mere ability to use "is true" in accordance with ES. Being able to do that is to have implicit knowledge of the meaning of "is true". Because, according to the deflationary theorist, the ability to use "is true" in accordance with ES is both understanding all there is to understand about truth with respect sentences and implicit knowledge, explicit knowledge is not simply the knowledge that the sentence used on the right-hand side gives the truth conditions of the sentence on the left. They need to understand what the sentence on the right says by grasping its intentional properties[11].

11 If it is objected that Horwich and Brandom both deny that there are any substantial intentional properties to be grasped, I can put the worry like this. Both Horwich and Brandom accept that there is a difference between implicit and explicit knowledge. They both think that being able to use a sentence correctly is to have implicit knowledge. This is as true of sentences in a theory of meaning

I can put the point like this, for the deflationary theorist, ES summarises, but does not explain, explicit knowledge. It is true to say that a speaker with explicit knowledge is one who understands that the sentence used on the right-hand side of an instance of ES gives the truth conditions of the sentence on the left, but according to a deflationary theory that does not tell us what such understanding consists in. It does not help to say that she understands that p is true if and only if q, where 'q' is a further sentence in use. We can always ask what does the understanding of the new sentence in use consist in. To provide something that is not just a summary of her explicit knowledge, the deflationary theorist must turn her attention to the mental. She must provide an account of a mental state which is characteristic of explicit knowledge.

Before turning my attention to why deflationary theorists cannot provide an account of a mental state that is characteristic of explicit knowledge, I want to point out one moral from the foregoing. Even if the deflationary theorist thinks that, as a matter of fact, explicit knowledge comes from recognising of sentences that they have truth conditions, what the deflationary theorist owes is an account of what it is to have explicit knowledge of the truth conditions of a sentence which is not simply a matter of being able use a sentence to express that understanding. She needs an account of what it is to understand the 'p's that is not, fundamentally, linguistic understanding.

It is key to a deflationary account of truth that thinking is not fundamentally characterised in intentional terms. It is easiest to see that with belief by way of contrast with one who thinks that truth is ineliminable from accounts of the mind. Belief is the mental state that is the outcome of a judgement. If truth is treated as a substantial property which is organising thinking, then judgement has to be understood as the act of taking to be true. In addition, there is no more fundamental account of the nature of judgement than as the attitude of taking true. Belief is then the attitude of holding

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as it is of sentences free of semantic vocabulary. So, they need some account of what it is to have explicit knowledge of the sentences used on the right-hand side of instances of ES. As having explicit knowledge requires being able to engage in pedantic evaluation of your beliefs, that explicit knowledge is going to be knowledge of what the 'p's claim. That is, they need an account which is summarised by ES, but, in the end, would have something unique to say about what it is to have explicit knowledge of each and every sentence. In other words, they need to make sense of our coming to understand the intentional properties of our vocabulary, but what is denied is that that is a matter of understanding intentional properties themselves.

something to be true, and again this is a substantial and irreducible claim. This sort of view characterises mental states according to their intentional properties. It is to treat a mental state as fundamentally a recognition and response to how things are. If that is denied, as it is by the deflationist, then, although judgement is still the act of taking to be true, to take to be true is simply to move into a belief state. The deflationist then needs some account of what it is to be in a state of belief. That account will be in terms of some characteristic pattern of interaction with other mental states and behaviour. It will not be in terms of a belief being the attitude of holding true. It leaves the theorist with some further work to do. She needs an account of why those states are about anything at all. That is, she needs some account of why those states have truth conditions[12]. Once again, the deflationist might deny that she owes any sort of explanation. She might maintain that the fact that a thought makes a characteristic difference to the activity of thinking is sufficient to account for its intentionality. This is the option adopted by minimalists and the pragmatic phenomenalists. Alternatively, she might offer a reductive account of intentionality. This is the option taken by redundancy theorists.

The moral of the last paragraph is that deflationary theorists are committed to a complete account of the mental being of the following form:

1. Provide a description of a system;
2. Show why the outputs of that system are about anything.

This is what Jennifer Hornsby has labelled "a two task idea" of the mental (1989, p. 549). Anyone whose idea of the mental is two task has to think that the fact that mental states are recognitions and responses to ways for things to be requires some explanation. What they aim to do is provide a description of the responses which constitute thinking, and then show that, given a suitable environment, anything which tends to respond to those ways is thinking about the world. Importantly, they maintain that describing the dispositions which constitute mental states and showing that those states have truth conditions is a complete description of thinking. By way of contrast, the one task idea is

12 In fact, they also need an account of why truth seems so salient. Alternative predicates could have been used to interpret mental states. It is not obvious why we should valorise truth over these alternative predicates. This is the challenge Brian Loar thinks he needs to face (see chapter 2 and (Loar, 1981 and 1982).

that we have to start from an understanding of thinking in its own terms, i.e. in terms of truth as organising rational behaviour, and then work hard to show that there could be a mechanism which allows us to be rational.

Another, perspicuous, way of seeing this difference is that the one task idea treats the description of mentality as requiring a description of the way the world strikes the thinker, where as two task idea merely requires a description of the creature's ability. The former is a description of the perspective of the thinker, and the latter a perspective neutral account of the mind. A two task view of the mind is clearly sufficient as an account of implicit knowledge. All that is required to possess implicit knowledge of some thing is to have the ability to respond to it in a rational manner. This is precisely what is described by a perspective neutral account of mentality. However, as I showed above, a thinker with 'mere' implicit knowledge is one for which getting things right is not a problem. It is one that is not aware that it has a view on the world. For a creature to gain explicit knowledge they have to become aware that they are thinking about the world. That requires them to be able to evaluate their beliefs according to COR, which is to say, according to the truth value of what is believed. The challenge for the deflationist is showing how an account of the mental life of a subject as being characterised by characterising its dispositional setup can make sense of that subject as recognising that there is a sense in which its beliefs are correct when true.

Once again, to say that a thinker recognises that her beliefs are correct when they are true is, according to the deflationist, a summary of what a thinker can do when she has explicit knowledge. As in the linguistic case, the reason is that truth is simply a device of generalisation. What the deflationist needs is an account, perhaps on a piecemeal basis, that explains what it is for a thinker to recognise of any instance of ET what situation is described by the sentence in use on the right-hand side. For some given p, the deflationary theorist owes us an account of what knowledge that the thought that p is true if and only if p consists in. It cannot simply be to have the belief that p. That is a matter of the ability to have, when things go well, a particular type of mental state with a particular content when it is the case that p. Nor can it be the ability to believe that you believe that p when in fact you do. On a deflationary view, believing that you believe that p is, simply, the ability to move, when things go well, into a particular type of mental state with a particular content when you believe that p. Just as

in the linguistic case, what is required is knowledge of what situation the thought that p is about.

The obvious thought might be that knowledge of what situation the thought that p is about requires the ability to identify the relevant situation in more than one way and the ability to identify the two modes of presentation[13]. However, a creature that can do that is not one that has the world in view. To see this assume that the belief that p and the belief that q are two ways of responding to the same state of affairs, there might be a creature that can move into a new belief state that is the belief *that the belief that p and the belief that q are equivalent*. This is not so far-fetched. Imagine a rat that can identify a particular location by both its sight and smell. If it is able to use its different experiences in each sensory modality to better get round the world, it makes sense to say that it is identifying its experiences as being of the same situation and using that to build a better conception of how the world is laid out. What the rat is not doing is identifying the *content* of its belief that p and the *content* of its belief that q as being about the whereabouts of a particular location. It does not identify the thought that p or the thought that q as being about anything.

But, why does it matter that the rat does not identify the thought that p or the thought that q. as being about anything? After all, as the rat gains more information, and as things change, the rat will update its conception of how the world is laid out. Its beliefs are, by and large, going to track the truth. Importantly, it seems plausible that, in a large number of cases, when the rat discovers that things have changed it will update its beliefs. It might well also change its beliefs when false beliefs lead to the failure of its projects. Why is that not evaluating its beliefs according to COR, and, thus, explicit knowledge? The answer is that what is being described is a system that acts in accordance with COR, but that is not evaluation according to COR. What the rat does is evaluate its beliefs according to whether or not they lead to success, but because, by and large, true beliefs lead to success, the rat will end up adjusting its beliefs in accordance with COR. To do pedantic evaluation, a thinker needs to recognise that its beliefs have intentional properties. It needs to realise that the content of its belief that p is such that it makes the belief about some way for the world to be and to recognise what that way is. In other words, it needs to recognise that the thought that p is true if and only if p.

13 This is exactly the strategy adopted by Ruth Millikan (1987) and (1989).

By naturalising intentionality the deflationary theorist makes it impossible for a thinker ever to come to realise that she is recognising and responding to the world. Mental states are characterised according to their dispositional characteristics. That set of dispositions is then shown to be a series of responses to ways for things to be. But, no matter how sophisticated that system and how flexible it is in its responses, such a system can never come to realise what it is up to. If such a system is sophisticated enough to respond to its own responses, it makes sense to describe it as identifying what it is responding to. However, it is not in a position to evaluate its responses as meaningful. It cannot think of its responses as being responses to ways for things to be. So, at best such a system has implicit knowledge of what it is up to. It can never come to have the explicit knowledge which is characteristic of mature human engagement with the world.

§2 Minimal Autonomy

Given that non-human animals are able to engage in something like thinking there is at least some sort of priority of the mental over the linguistic. This much is certainly true: mental life is temporally prior to language use. It seems more than likely that having a mental life is a prerequisite for being able to use a language[14]. If that is right, then, in psychology, there is an explanatory priority of the mental over the linguistic. However, I will defend the view that it is language and not thought that reveals how we stand to the world. But, given the temporal priority of the mental, the question now is:

What is it to have a mental life? It is not a uniquely human phenomenon. A wide variety of creatures have a mental life. Having a mental life is a practical ability. It is a way of responding to the world. But, what makes a response a mental response? I argue that there is a minimal autonomy constraint on the mental. What this means is that a mental response is something which a creature does, and not merely something which a creature has. So when a human goes to lie down in the sun, this is the result of the decision which she has made and not merely a display of positive phototropism[15]. The

14 This is not the same claim as that thinking is temporally prior to using a language. Dummett's essay "Truth and Meaning" (Dummett, 1993, p. 147) deals with the various options in the debate.

15 I take it that this rules out Ruth Millikan's bacteria from having mentality. These bacteria can locate oxygen free water by having magnetozomes which are differentially responsive to magnetic north.

reason why there is a minimal autonomy constraint on the mental is that a mental response is a taking of the world to be a certain way. Creatures with mentality take the world to be a certain way.

But what is involved in taking the world to be a certain way? I want to claim that a phototropic plant does not take the world to contain light and dark. It is merely differentially responsive to light levels. In contrast to the plant, a rat which sticks to the shadows because it fears being eaten has a mental life. This is because it is taking the world to contain light and dark areas (or at any rate safe and unsafe locations)[16]. The

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The bacteria in the northern hemisphere, when scientists aren't mucking about with magnets, follow the pull of their magnetozomes towards geomagnetic north, which turns out to be down to oxygen free water (Millikan, 1989, p. 290). It is not enough to be differentially responsive to the direction of the magnetic field for a creature's response to the world to be something that it does. It needs a project.

It is not clear to me whether Millikan thinks that these bacteria have a mind or merely that that pull of the magnetosomes represent the direction of oxygen free water. She writes:

> Am I really prepared to say that these creatures, too, have mental states, that they think? I am not prepared to say that. On the contrary, the representations that they have must differ from human beliefs in at least six very fundamental ways.
>
> Millikan, 1989, p. 294

To my ear, that suggests these bacteria lack mentality. However, she also writes:

> In sum, these six differences between our representations and those of the bacterium, or Fodor's paramecia, ought to be enough amply to secure our superiority, to make us feel comfortably more endowed with mind.
>
> Millikan, 1989, p. 297

That suggests the bacteria and paramecia are minded, but not very well. Millikan thinks she can 'naturalize' having a project in terms of normal function, where normal function is determined by the evolutionary history of an organism. If Millikan is right, then phototropic plants and magnetically sensitive bacteria do have mentality because they have projects. However, it seems to me that what bacteria have is not yet a desire let alone a belief. I think that nature, despite selection pressures, provides no norms. Bacteria can no more be said to want to avoid oxygen than a stone can be said to want to roll down hill because neither value anything. For a good defence of this view see Morris, 1992, chapter 11. However, nothing I will say about the nature of truth turns on that issue. The important point is that I am in agreement with Millikan that minimal autonomy is a necessary and sufficient condition for mentality.

16 I do not wish to be wedded to these empirical claims. It seems to me to be reasonable to deny mentality to phototropic plants as they lack a central nervous system. And it seems odd to think that a creature whose behaviour is as complicated as a rat's should be no more than a sophisticated input-

difference is that plants do not do things for a purpose which they set themselves. To have a purpose which you set yourself is to have a project. This does not require the rat to have explicit knowledge of what it is doing. A rat can have a project by desiring things. It does not need to know, even implicitly, that it desires those things. A creature with a project has some aims. That is to say there must be something that the creature wants. The upshot is that a creature can behave with a purpose only when it is possible for it to have desires.

I take a desire to be a pro-attitude towards a state of affairs. When I desire a cup of coffee, I adopt a pro-attitude towards the state of affairs of having a cup of coffee. All of which is a very long winded way of saying that I want a cup of coffee. However, the long winded formulation is revealing. Explaining desires in terms of pro-attitudes reveals that wanting involves a form of positive evaluation[17]. When I want a cup of coffee, I must positively evaluate having a cup of coffee. At this point we are in normative territory. Wanting a cup of coffee is finding having a cup of coffee good. We have to introduce the loaded, normative term "good" in order to make sense of positive evaluation[18]. However, a creature cannot find a possible situation good, unless it has

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output box. If it turns out otherwise, I will be surprised. It will not affect the philosophy. Furthermore, if there is an evolutionary account of having a project that includes positive phototropism, then mentality is more widespread than I think. However, a plant has mentality if and only if it reaches the minimal autonomy constraint, and a rat lacks mentality if it fails to meet the minimal autonomy constraint.

17 In fact, I think it involves a form of positive evaluation because it is in fact a form of positive evaluation. To avoid controversy I have only committed myself to the weaker claim. However, it seems to me that adopting a pro-attitude towards the state of affairs is sufficient for wanting that state of affairs to be actual. One might try to resist this view because, of course it is possible to have a pro-attitude towards some state of affairs, say having a cigarette, without doing anything to bring it about. However, in cases like this, it seems to me that the agent in question wants more than one outcome, but because those outcomes are incompatible, she is only able to act one way. In addition, on my view practical irrationality is a pervasive phenomenon. A smoker who is trying to quit smoking positively evaluates having a cigarette and negatively evaluates it. I find that particular bullet palatable because it seems to me that practical irrationality is a pervasive phenomenon. Being a rational agent is a very difficult business.

18 Those who have qualms about normative vocabulary please note that equating positive evaluation with finding something good is compatible with a deflationary account of goodness. There may be no more to finding something good than desiring it.

some sort of world view. That is, it needs to have a rudimentary conception of how things are in the world, and how they can be manipulated. But because a belief is an attitude towards how things are in the world, a creature which has a rudimentary conception of how things are in the world has something akin to beliefs[19]. By understanding mentality as a creature's response to the world, we understand mentality as something that a creature does. A creature with a mental life is one which has an evaluative worldview. It finds particular outcomes to be good, and that is to take the world to be a particular way and to desire certain outcomes. But to take the world to be a particular way and to desire certain outcomes is to have projects of one's own. This then is the minimal autonomy constraint on mentality:

MAC: a creature has mentality if and only if it has an evaluative worldview.

A creature that meets MAC is one which sets its own projects. However, a creature can set its own projects, and thereby meet MAC, without having to do any reflective work. Our lab rat has the project of finding cheese. This is because it takes the state of affairs of having cheese to be good. That is, it has a pro-attitude towards finding cheese. On this view, finding something good is not a matter of representing a state of affairs as desirable. It is to desire that state of affairs. As long as that is something that the rat does, it meets MAC and sets its own projects. If a creature meets MAC, it has attitudes. The constraint is a *minimal* autonomy constraint because there is no requirement that the creature could have done otherwise. It may be that the lab rat is constitutionally incapable of evaluating eating cheese as anything other than good. If that is so, then whenever it is presented with cheese it will eat it. Nevertheless, our lab rat has a desire to eat cheese, and takes the world to contain cheese[20].

Invoking minimal autonomy as the requirement for mentality helps us

19 The "something like" is important because at this stage we should be neutral about propositional content. We do not need to ascribe full blown propositional content to the mental states of 0^{th} level creatures. We might find it useful to reserve "belief" as a label for a propositional attitude, i.e. as an attitude towards a proposition. Nevertheless, belief like states and desires come together, but there is an explanatory priority to desires.

20 It is possible to argue that the only way to meet the minimal autonomy constraint is to represent a situation to oneself. If that and what follows is correct, only creatures that can evaluate linguistic practice have mentality. Nothing in what follows turns on this dispute.

understand why thinking takes place in the "space of reasons"[21]. A creature who meets the minimal autonomy constraint is one which takes some situations to be good. That is, it evaluates situations. But, evaluating a potential situation as good commits a creature, other things being equal, to doing something. We can put this another way: there is something that the creature should do. For example, the lab rat that wants food should go looking for food, and if there is cheese to the left, the lab rat should turn left. The thought is that without projects a creature cannot be motivated to act, but with projects, not only is it motivated, there are things it should do. A creature with an evaluative worldview is one which can recognise and respond to 'shoulds'. In other words, what a minimally autonomous creature has to do is respond to reasons. On such an account, what a rational creature does is recognise of a situation in the world that it provides a reason for action. For example, our lab rat on finding some cheese has a reason to eat it. Our lab rat has been looking for food. If it does recognise the cheese as food, it has succeeded. It has done what it should. If it fails to eat cheese, it has made a mistake. The rat should eat the cheese because it is food (and the rat has set itself out to find food). Once a creature has projects a suitably placed observer is in a position to evaluate its behaviour from the point of view of the creature. This is because the suitably placed observer knows what it is that the creature should do.

To avoid confusion it is worth reiterating that a creature, like our rat that responds to reasons can do this at the 0^{th} level. It should not be a worry that I have attributed too much cognitive sophistication to non-human animals. All of this is occurring at the ground floor. Finding something good is desiring it, and that thereby commits the creature to courses of action which will bring it about. Other things being equal, that is what the creature will do. This is a description of how the world strikes the creature. Part of the way that the world strikes the rat is that it should find food. It only

21 The phrase is from Wilfred Sellars ("Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind", sec 36). It is also given much play by John McDowell in “Mind and World”. It might be helpful to register a point of contrast with both Sellars and McDowell. Both thinkers have a thick conception of reason. That is, they both take being in the space of reasons to be a matter of being able to make inferences. I think this is right as an account of what it is to be a thinker. However, I am not at the moment asking what it is to be a thinker. I am trying to characterise being minded. The reasons involved here are much thinner. Once a creature has projects, features of the world become reasons for particular courses of action. All the creature has to do, when things go right, is be able to recognise and respond to them.

seems strange to say that because the rat has no idea that that is how the world strikes it. In describing what is going on for the creature we have to use a description which could neither be formulated nor acknowledged as correct by that creature. This in no way implies that the description is not true of the creature. Thinking is a practical ability, and wanting, say, food is taking food to be a good. If a creature takes food to be a good its behaviour can be evaluated by an observer who recognises what the creature is up to. It is legitimate of the biologist to think that her lab rat has made a mistake when it goes the wrong way in the maze. The legitimacy of that thought comes from the fact that the lab rat has made a mistake. However, a lab rat can make a mistake only if it is committed to a particular course of action[22]. The lab rat which wants food is a creature that thinks that food is a good, and, given that it has no countervailing desires, is thereby committed to go in search of food. If it is to behave correctly, searching for food is what it should do.

§3 Reason and Evaluation; Three Grades of Evaluative Involvement

I have argued that a creature which meets the minimal autonomy constraint is one which can respond to reasons. This is because, as I am understanding "reason", a reason is something that counts in favour of a particular course of action, and here "course of action" is understood in broad enough terms that it includes having a mental state. That "something" is to be understood as encompassing any feature of the world that could plausibly be thought to count in favour of a course of action. So, it might include features of situations. For example, that Audrey is your friend might count in favour of buying her a drink. It might include desires. For example, wanting to whistle might count in favour of whistling. It might include intentions; that you intended to go for a picnic with Naomi might count in favour of preparing a potato salad[23].

22 It might be worth comparing the lab rat with a robot. Robots do not make mistakes. Their programmers make mistakes. If the robot goes the wrong way in the maze, there is something wrong with the program, but the responsibility for the program lies with the programmer and not with the robot. If the robot has been programmed to "learn", then the program has not yet run its course. We still do not have a mistake on the part of the robot.

23 Here I am following Scanlon who opens "What We Owe to Each Other" with the claim that "I will take the idea of a reason as primitive. Any attempt to explain what it is to be a reason for something seems to me seems to me to lead back to the same idea: a consideration that counts in favour of it" (1998, p. 17).

Creatures which are able to respond to reasons are creatures which are able to take things as considerations in favour of courses of action. Of course, sometimes we, and other rational creatures, get things wrong. Sometimes we miss an important consideration, and sometimes we take something to count in favour of a course of action when in fact it does not. However, when things go well, when the epistemic situation is right, the rational creature gets the weighting of considerations right, and takes the correct course of action. That we talk of "the correct course of action" shows that reasons are bound up with "shoulds". What reasons there are determine both what should happen and provide a standard for evaluation. One way of thinking about the nature of reason is to think about evaluation. This is the strategy that I will pursue. There are three ways in which something can count in favour of a course of action, and thus three ways in which actions can be evaluated. These are:

(a) hypothetical reasoning (means-end)

(b) categorical reasoning (with respect to the good)

(c) procedural reasoning (with respect to rules).

It is important to note that, although each type of rational demand is characterised by a "should", each type expresses a different kind of reason. A hypothetical demand like, "if you want to catch the post, you should set off for the post office now" expresses a different type of reason from the categorical demand, "you should set off to the post office now, your mother will be disappointed if she does not get her birthday card on time". That, in turn, is different from the procedural demand, "if you really believe that it is 4:30, and you want to catch the post, you should set off to the post office now".

Putting things like this helps make sense of why detachment does not appear to be formally valid in deontic contexts. Imagine the following scenario, your friend wants to send anthrax through the post to her sworn enemy. The post is about to close for the day. It is clear that if she wants to catch the post, she should set off now. She does want to catch the post, but she should not set off now. She should not be indulging in germ warfare. Nevertheless, there is something irrational about your friend if she does not run down to the post office. However, once it is accepted that the "should" of a hypothetical demand, the "should" of a categorical and the "should" of a procedural demand express

different types of reason, it is easy to see why having immoral ends does not give you reason to pursue immoral acts. What we have is a good old-fashioned fallacy of equivocation. Consider:

A1. If you want to send anthrax in the post, you should leave now.

A2. You want to send anthrax in the post.

Therefore,

A3. You should leave now.

A1-A3 is an invalid argument because A3 is most plausibly read as a categorical demand. The should of a 1 is a hypothetical should.

Now, it might be objected that there could be, or indeed has to be, a reading of the "should" of A3 as a hypothetical should, but A1 and A2 do not give you even a hypothetical reason to leave now. The mistake here results from confusing a hypothetical reason with the conclusion of a piece of practical reasoning. If there is a hypothetical reading available of A3, then A3 is to be read as an elliptical form of:

A3a. If you want to do that, you should leave now.

After all hypothetical reasons are reasons conditional on a particular end. But, the "that" of A3a refers back to the end of sending anthrax in the post. It makes A3a restatement of A1. If the "should" of A3 is given a hypothetical reading, then there is no problem with the validity of the argument but it provides no insight as to what the agent ought to do. The conclusion of a piece of practical reasoning is a claim about what you, the agent, have a reason to do. But that is a conclusion about what you think may or should be done. It is a categorical evaluation about what me or should occur. This is because wanting an outcome is evaluating it as a good.

This is not to say that hypothetical reasons are not really reasons. If some course of action is a good way of achieving some goal, then, from the point of view of achieving that goal, the fact that that course of action is a good way of achieving that goal lends weight to undertaking that course of action. Equivalently, but from the perspective of evaluation, if the question is how to achieve X, then if someone finds a good way of achieving X, she has done what she should.

There also might also be a reading of A3 in which the "should" is understood as procedural. In this case as well, the argument is valid and the conclusion true. There is something irrational about your friend if she, wanting to send anthrax to her sworn

enemy, makes no effort to catch the post. That irrationality stems from her not following the procedural norms of practical reasoning. She does not do what she has procedural reasons to do. Once again, the fact that that is the case does not show that she has any categorical reason to leave the house. Indeed, especially given her murderous intent, she ought to be concerning herself with the safe disposal of her lethal weapon.

Hypothetical reasoning is means-end reasoning. Having a particular goal in mind provides the goal seeker with reasons to adopt certain courses of action. So, although it is true that all roads lead to Rome, not all roads are equally good as routes to the eternal city. If you want to get to Rome from London, you should not head north up the M1. If you want to go to Rome from London, you should fly. This is, perhaps, the least controversial form of evaluation. There are better and worse ways of achieving some goal. A creature which meets the minimal autonomy constraint is one that sets its own goals. Those goals set the benchmark for successful performance.

However, it is also prima facie plausible that one can evaluate a course of action without reference to the aims of the agent. We might think that certain courses of action are dreadful, or that others are mandatory. So, one might think that going to Rome from London is unduly environmentally destructive. It is a bad thing to do. You might think that people who live that far from Rome should not try to get there. This sort of evaluation is evaluation with respect to the good. To think that such evaluation is possible is to think that the world is such that there are reasons to act and refrain from acting irrespective of an agent's projects. Whether the world is such that there are categorical reasons has come under sustained sceptical attack, but until we are convinced by the sceptic we have no reason to rule out the possibility of categorical evaluation of action[24].

The final method of evaluation is with respect to a set of rules. When in force, rules can prescribe, prohibit or permit. When a set of rules is in force, there is a special type of activity which I shall label "a practice". The existence of a practice creates new possibilities of action. It is possible to evaluate the actions which are part of a practice with respect to the rules which govern the practice. Prescriptions and prohibitions provide shoulds. For example, it is a rule of bridge that when the card play is in

24 Perhaps the most famous modern example is JL Mackie's "Ethics" (1990, especially chapter 1). The scepticism can be found in the mouth of Callicles in Plato's Gorgias, and in the mouth of Thrasymachus in the Republic, book 1 (both in Plato, 1961).

progress, if at all possible, each player must follow suit. This rule provides a prescription. If North leads a heart, and East has a Heart, East must follow suit. Given that East can follow suit, East must follow suit. Prescriptions tell us what we must do, and "must" implies "should". In this way prescriptions provide shoulds. Similarly, prohibitions provide shoulds. It is forbidden, in chess, to castle through check. If Black's Queen is bearing down on an open f-file, White must not castle King's side. "Must not" implies "should not", so we have another variety of shoulds provided by prohibitions.

Permissions are slightly more complicated. If a rule permits a certain course of action, it is neutral about whether or not the action should be undertaken. However, these permissive rules in part define a practice. They create new possibilities of action which can be evaluated hypothetically, or in extreme cases categorically. In the just mentioned Bridge example, if East has both the Four of Hearts and the Queen of Hearts, East is entitled to play either card. But, one course of action will be better than the other. As the second hand, it is more likely that the low card is the better card to play[25]. This is hypothetical evaluation. On the assumption that each player is taking part in the practice with the aim of winning, their actions can be evaluated in terms of their contribution towards victory.

There will be scenarios where what a Bridge player does is morally loaded. People play Bridge for money. It seems to me morally dubious to bankrupt somebody over a game of Bridge. If one player will not quit, but is incapable of playing well, it seems beholden on her opponents to play badly and ensure that their margin of victory is not financially ruinous. This is an example of categorical evaluation. This sort of example is far-fetched when it comes to pastimes. However, not all practices are trivial. Driving on British roads is a rule governed activity. It is a practice. Car drivers are permitted to drive at 20 miles an hour on urban roads. In bad weather doing so can be dangerous. Car drivers should not do it. The existence of practices creates new possibilities of action. Those actions, like any other, can be evaluated categorically or hypothetically. Permissive rules form part of many practices by creating new possibilities of action.

Rules are bound up with practices. Indeed, a set of rules defines a practice, and thereby constitute new possibilities of action. This allows a statement of the rules to

25 Each partnership is aiming to take as many tricks as possible, and, in many setups, playing low as the second hand maximises the number of tricks a partnership will take.

describe the practice. I want to think now about what it is for there to be a practice, and what it is to take part in a practice. A practice requires more than the possibility of a description by means of rules. Where there is more or less uniform behaviour, a statement of a rule can provide an empirical generalisation of what something tends to do. But, the fact that one can describe behaviour with rules is not sufficient for there to be a practice. A computer program determines what outputs a computer will provide depending on what inputs it is given. A statement of rules will provide a generalisation of the behaviour of the computer. Computers do not malfunction that often, so the generalisation will be very accurate. Let us assume that the computer is reasonably simple and that it is running a single program. Perhaps that program generates approximations of the Mandelbrot set within 20 iterations. The program will only accept a complex number as input, sets z and n to 0, and goes on generating numbers according to the iterative formula, $z_{n+1} = z_n^2 + c$, where c is the input. If $z \leq 2$ it takes its output as it next input, c.. If $z \geq 2$, it stops. If, after 20 iterations, z is less than 2, it prints its initial input. Six rules describe the program:

i) take a number, c, as input and let n = 0.

ii) if c is a complex number, generate a number, z, according to the formula: $z_1 = 0^2 + c$ and add 1 to n.

iii) generate the next number according to the formula: $z_{n+1} = z_n^2 + c$ and add 1 to n

iv) If $z \leq 2$, repeat iii.

v) if n = 20 and $z \leq 2$, print c.

vi) If $z \geq 2$, stop.

Those rules describe the behaviour of the computer. However, there is not a practice here. For there to be a practice there have to be practitioners. A practitioner is a creature who can engage in the practice. The computer is not a practitioner because it does not engage in anything. Only agents can engage in activities. The rules describe the behaviour of the computer, but it does not meet the minimal autonomy constraint. It is not an agent. The computer does not undertake any course of action.

My claim is that to engage in a practice one needs to acknowledge the force of the rules. One plays Bridge, engages in the practice, by acknowledging the force of the

rules. To acknowledge the force of the rules of Bridge is not to follow the rules, it may not even be to try to follow them. For teaching purposes, one may allow weaker opponents to withdraw a poor card or alter a bad bid. If one plays like that, there is no attempt to follow the rules. However, one acknowledges the force of the rules by recognising that they set the standards for correct and incorrect play. The easiest way to acknowledge the force of a set of rules is to make explicit reference to the rules. Doing that requires 1st level abilities. However, having first level abilities is not a prerequisite of engaging in a practice. The practitioners do not need to have any explicit awareness that there are rules, or be able to formulate them to acknowledge the force of the rules. The acknowledgement of the force of the rules can be implicit in practice. That acknowledgement could be manifested by a player saying, "well, one should not really withdraw a card, but it would be a much better game if you did not throw away the ace of trumps". It would be an odd sort of Bridge player who did not explicitly realise that there were rules, or who was unable to formulate them. Nevertheless, being unable to explicitly formulate the rules of Bridge is not a barrier to taking part in the practice.

A creature that is able to implicitly acknowledge the force of a rule is one which is able to modify its behaviour in accordance with the rule because it is the rule. The simplest way to do that is to withdraw actions which are not in accordance with the rule and to seek to prevent others from breaking the rule. However, as we saw above, it can also be done by tipping one's hat to what should be done. One might have a certain air of embarrassment about breaking the rule, or hesitate before doing it. But, a creature which is worrying about the propriety of performances in this way is not worrying about whether these performances are a good way of achieving some other goal, or whether these performances are in themselves good; it is taking part in a practice[26].

§4 The Solution? Truth as a Semantic Predicate

26 This allows for the possibility of there being rules without the existence of sanctions (contra Korsgaard, (Korsgaard, 1996, 104). A rule exists when there is the possibility of it being in force, and a set of rules are in force when agents take part in the practice governed by those rules. Sanctions certainly enforce rules on agents who have no wish to engage in the practice, but, as we have seen, rules can be in force so long as practitioners are prepared to modify or evaluate their behaviour with respect to those rules.

Agents undertake courses of action because they have an evaluative world view. That is, they take the world to be a certain way and hold certain states of affairs to be good. Holding a state of affairs to be a good outcome commits an agent to trying, where possible, to bring about that state of affairs[27]. Not all courses of action are equally effective at bringing about the states of affairs which an agent takes to be good. So, there are courses of action which a creature with an evaluative world view should undertake and others which it should avoid. Somebody who knows enough about an agent and the world is in a position to evaluate the behaviour of that agent. They can do this by seeing if the agent's actions are a good way to bring about the agent's desires. It may well be that some states of affairs are in fact desirable while others should be shunned. If that is the case, some courses of action are good or bad independently of the way they strike an agent and should be undertaken/avoided irrespectively of what the agent wants. Agents that are able to acknowledge the force of rules are able to take part in practices. This increases their possibilities of action. In addition, the rules of the practice provide reasons for particular courses of action. Where the rules prohibit an action, that action should be shunned; where the rules demand a particular course of action, that action should be undertaken. This provides us with three types of reasons, hypothetical, categorical and procedural. Reasons provide shoulds; a should has both consequences for action and provides a standard of evaluation.

An agent who is operating at the ground floor is an agent who recognises and responds to shoulds. Those shoulds can be hypothetical, categorical or from the rules of a practice. As being able to respond to shoulds is a practical ability, it seems possible that one can respond to shoulds without having explicit knowledge that this is what one is doing. If somebody has explicit knowledge about a practical ability, they are thereby in a position to evaluate their actions and the actions of other agents. Both thinking and using a language are practical abilities. They are activities that agents undertake. As adult humans, we are able to have explicit knowledge that this is what we are up to. I want to show how it is that we are able to make this move. It is time for an outline of a

27 Things are made more convoluted because agents have more than one project. It may be that that a mouse wants cheese, takes having cheese to be a good, and also wants to stay alive. If the only available cheese is in a mousetrap, its positive evaluation of having cheese is in conflict with its positive evaluation of staying alive. Going into the mousetrap is a good way of getting the cheese, but a bad way of staying alive.

suggestion as to how it is that one moves from the ground floor to the 1st level. The challenge is to show how one can move from having practical abilities which are exercised in thinking and speaking to having explicit reflective knowledge of what has been done when those abilities are exercised. The clue is that acts of speaking and acts of thinking can be evaluated. So, thinking and using a language are rational activities. As thinking and speaking are rational activities, my simple suggestion is that at least one of thinking and language use is a practice. The idea is that there are rules which govern and constitute each practice. Speakers and thinkers at the 0th level engage in the practice by implicitly acknowledging the force of those rules[28]. We gain explicit knowledge of the practice by learning to make explicit evaluations of the practice, and, crucially, coming to see the point of making those evaluations.

Both practices are intentional, they are about the world. The most obvious way, which will also turn out to be the only way, for these practices to be about the world is if the world provides a reason for a speech act or adopting a propositional attitude. For that to be the case, truth has to be a substantial property that can be used to evaluate uses of language and acts of thought. If that is right, then no deflationary theory of truth is correct. In addition, there is a crucial dis-analogy between thought and language. Language is a representational medium whereas thought, in the first instance, is not. The idea, to be defended, is that intentionality is a more widespread phenomenon than representation. Representations are intentional, but so are some non-representational items. In particular, mental states are intentional but are not representational. It might be worth noting that I will be using "representation" in a narrower way than it is sometimes used. What I want to capture is the crucial difference between language use and

28 It might be objected that this seems to make belief voluntary. It is not as if we have a choice over what we believe, so how could we implicitly acknowledge the force of whatever rule governs belief? Forming a belief is something that happens. However, we do change our mind when things go wrong. We are also embarrassed when we have been foolish. That embarrassment is enough to show an implicit acknowledgement of the rule which governs belief. It seems to me that plenty of mammals display embarrassment when they have been foolish. This might be sufficient to attribute implicit acknowledgement of the rules to them. However, I am going to argue that in fact no non-linguistic creature goes in for believing. This is because belief aims at truth, and I will argue that it is impossible to aim at truth without the concept of truth, and that to have the concept of truth requires a grasp of the concept.

thinking. The idea is that sentences are useful by being understood, whereas thoughts are useful by being had. Both sentences and thoughts are intentional items in that they are both about ways the world to be. However, for a sentence to make a difference to what a thinker understands about the world, it must be understood by the thinker. This is not true of thoughts. Thoughts make a difference to understanding by being had.

As language is a representational medium, linguistic activity is powerful enough to describe its own rationality. The rationality of linguistic activity is rule-governed rationality. In other words, linguistic activity is part of a practice. A language has the power (or can be extended to have the power) to describe the structure of the activity, and to give many of the rules of the practice of using that language. I am going to show that we can make sense of explicit knowledge by understanding a linguistic practice as consisting of an infinite set of possible moves. These moves are, what I will call, linguistic acts. A linguistic act is performed by uttering a sentence. That act will be a way of presenting content with a particular force. The idea is that what a speaker wishes to achieve by making an utterance, makes no difference to the significance of the linguistic act she uses to further her projects. Both the content and the force of a use of language are determined by the rules which govern the practice. Those rules do not make reference to the language user's intentions. Instead, they determine the significance of uses of sentences by determining the grounds and consequences of using them like that. As what can be done with a language is infinite, it follows that there are an infinite number of linguistic rules for speakers to get to grips with.

However, just as there is a finite stock of words from which any sentence can be made, there are finite number of types of linguistic act. Two acts of the same type have the same type of grounds and the same type of consequences. For example, it might be that all assertions should be true and require the withdrawal of any assertion that has been made to the contrary. Language users have to get to grips with the contribution to content of individual words and the grounds and consequences of making different types of linguistic acts. When they have those two skills, they are able to make and understand an infinite number of linguistic acts. As theorists, we can model those two skills by building a bipartite theory that specifies the rules for performing different types of act and also specifies the possible contents of those acts by showing how individual words make a uniform difference to acts in which they can occur. I will argue that those

models are built by showing how truth organises linguistic practice and showing how words make a uniform difference to the truth values of sentences in which they can occur.

When it comes to specifying the rules for performing different types of acts, rather than anything technical, the difficulty is working out what the rules are. When it comes to specifying the contents, things are trickier. It looks like any language that has the power to refer to its own expressions and contains semantic vocabulary, a semantically closed language, is going to give rise to the semantic paradoxes. So, any attempt to give the content of all the possible sentences of that language is going to result in paradoxical claims. However, we can be neutral on the possibility of fully making explicit the rules of a linguistic practice. What matters is that it is possible for speakers to come to explicit knowledge. A semantically closed language, which presumably includes all natural languages, has the power to represent correctly the truth conditions of a very large number of its own sentences. In other words, we can at least make a start on describing our own practice by describing the rules for performing different types of linguistic act and by giving the contents of unproblematic sentences.

Speakers exploit this linguistic feature to criticise and commend the speech acts of their fellow language users. At the most basic level, we do this by chiding and chivvying along infant language users, "that's not a cat, silly, it's a dog". At a more sophisticated level, we complain that assertions are not true, but this is in fact what is going on even at the basic level. The parent who corrects his child's description of a toy dog as a cat is often not entering into a dispute with the child. He does not think there is a difference of opinion as to what type of creature is under discussion. Instead, he wants his child to use words correctly. Of course, children, like adults, do from time to time mistake toy felines for toy canines, but, at a young enough age, they are more likely to be misapplying words. What our exemplary infant has to do is learn to apply her words correctly, and that is to acknowledge the force of the rules which govern linguistic practice. Once she has learned to do that she is in a position to understand that other people are evaluating her linguistic performance and to make those evaluations herself. If she is an English speaker, she can do that by using the phrase "is true". If she speaks any other language, she will pick up on the truth predicate within that language. When she sees the point of those evaluations, she has grasped the concept of truth and is a

resident of the 1st level. If this is right, then the truth predicate is a predicate of evaluation. In addition, we gain our knowledge of truth through our grasping a predicate of evaluation. That is, we get our concept of truth by coming to understand what it is to use a truth predicate. For this reason I will call a truth predicate, "a value predicate". The claim is that it is primarily a *semantic* value predicate. Truth itself is then a substantial semantic value.

I will make two further claims:

I. that there is no other way to ascend to the 1st level;

II. that our grasp of truth is limited by its use as a semantic value predicate.

Claim II is important for two reasons. The first is that it is a version of the so-called "linguistic priority thesis". As the rules which govern thinking and language use are world involving, both practices are governed by truth norms. But if truth is entirely captured by a semantic value predicate, then at the very best thinking and language use are isomorphic practices and language has the priority in that thinking is mirroring language use. I will in fact argue that there is also a developmental priority. I will claim that until we have seen the point of a truth predicate, we cannot even implicitly acknowledge the force of truth involving rules. I will claim that there is a difference between having a mental life and being a believer. To have a mental life is to have a minimally autonomous response to the world, that is, to have an evaluative world view. But to have beliefs is to take part in the practice of thinking. On this view, having beliefs is a matter of taking part in a rule-governed activity. I will claim that those rules are truth involving, and so non-linguistic creatures cannot have their behaviour governed by such rules. Non-thinking but minimally autonomous creatures have a mental life, but their mental activities are not part of a practice. Instead, they aim at success. A description of their mental life aims to make sense of their motivational structure. It does so by describing what they aim at, and why they might aim at it. It does not attribute conceptual content to such creatures. If this is right, grasping truth does not merely open up new possibilities of thinking, it makes belief possible.

The second reason that the claim is important is that it rules out a variety of metaphysical strategies. For example, in order to vindicate realism about some area of enquiry, we would need to show how it is that a realistically conceived truth predicate could justifiably be thought to evaluate linguistic performances in that area. In other

words, thinking about language reveals how we stand to the world. There is no other way of doing it because either we are engaged at the ground level and finding out what there is, or we are surreptitiously assuming that there is more to truth than its being the property which evaluates linguistic events[29].

If thinking and language use are practices, then it has to be possible to say something about the rules which govern the practice. The following is a sketch of my view of the practices of thinking and using language. In the chapters that follow this sketch will be fleshed out, and it will be shown that no other understanding of thought and language is capable of meeting the practical capacity constraint and the explicit knowledge constraint. As practices they are, in the way I am using the term, rule governed activities. We are going to focus on the linguistic case because it is the most straightforward, and, I will suggest, also the basic case. I suggest that something like the following are the rules which govern language use. In all cases there are grounds and consequences for each type of linguistic action.

Assertoric practice is the most familiar. I am going to maintain that the rules here are something like[30]:

ASS1: One should: assert that p only if p.

ASS2: If the assertion that p is correct, one should: withdraw any assertion which has been made to the contrary.

Similar rules governs the expression of wishes:

OPT1: One should: wish that p only if one would like for it to be the case that p.

OPT2: If one wishes for it to be the case that p, and it is in your power without undue effort, one should: make it the case that p.

> The "wish" on the left-hand side is a linguistic action. In English we perform the sort of action when we say things like "I hope you are well".

29 If it is not already apparent, the spirit of Michael Dummett can be seen clearly here. The thesis is neither a defence of Dummett's views, nor reconstruction of them. However, my access to these ideas has been through Dummett, and much of the presentation of them will be with the aid of his writings. I am enormously indebted to him, but let the reader beware, I am not involved in the business of Dummett scholarship, nor would I be happy to attribute unhesitatingly these claims to him.

30 There is a discussion of these rules and suggestions of alternatives in chapter 4.

As a first approximation, questions are governed by the following rules:

> **INT1**: One may: ask whether p.
>
> **INT2:** If one has been asked whether p, one should: answer in the affirmative only if p.

And commands governed by the following rules:

> **IMP1**: One may: order someone to make it the case that p.
>
> **IMP2:** If one has received an order to make it the case that p, one should: make it the case that p[31][32].

The rules are formulated taking content for granted. When it comes to language, it is clearly sentences that are used. My claim is that those sentences have contents by being part of a practice. If that is right, and thinking is an isomorphic practice to using a language, then acts of thinking also have contents. To take a propositional attitude, on this view, is to adopt an attitude to a content. Just as we can use sentence with a variety of different forces, we can take a variety of different attitudes to the same content. What is common across different attitudes, I will call "a thought". Taking propositional attitudes to involve contents is not controversial. However, the linguistic priority thesis which I wish to defend says that we cannot grasp the content of our thoughts without first grasping the contents of our sentences. If that is right, we have to be able to grasp sentential content without having a grasp of mental content. So, I need something to say about how sentences and thoughts are content-full that is compatible with our grasp of content coming, in the first instance, from our understanding of sentences. My suggestion is that there is a primacy to the pragmatic. This is the view that it is only because there are things that can be done with sentences and thoughts that they have contents. I will focus on the linguistic case because it is primary. In understanding language, we start with the possibility of linguistic acts[33]. Because there is a practice of

31 In all of these rules "p" should be read as a schematic variable ranging over sentences in use.

32 These rules exclude social, practical and ethical considerations from the grounds and consequences of making linguistic acts. This will strike many as implausible. In chapter 4 there is a defence of the position, and a proposed alternative.

33 I use the term ‘linguistic act’ to distinguish the view from speech act theories. The full justification for this terminology will not emerge until chapter 4, but the brief reason is that I hold that unauthored texts are full of assertions, commands, questions and other linguistic acts.

using a language, it is possible to say things. Indeed, that practice consists in a variety of different types of linguistic act. That practice involves the successions of linguistic acts. But each speech act is a complete performance. By definition anything that has the completeness of a linguistic act is a use of a sentence[34]. Recognising this allows us to reformulate our rules for linguistic practice in terms of sentences and a truth predicate. So for example:

ASS1'. one should: assert S only if S is true.

But, sentences are also grammatical entities. They are composed out of words. The conditions in which any given sentence is true depends on the words used to construct the sentence. Of course words can appear in more than one sentence. This is the significance of compositionality. Words are the sort of things that make a systematic difference to the truth conditions of the sentences in which they can occur. On this view, we start from the idea of the different ways of using sentences. We then ask after the significance of a particular sentence. The conditions in which it is correct to use it as an assertion, or express it as a wish, and the consequence of its being issued as an order depends on its components and method of construction. These depend on the phrases and the syntax which make up the sentence. It is through understanding how sentences work that we gain insight into words and syntax.

I have claimed that we ascend to the 1st level when we learn to evaluate sentence use. Here is a suggestion as to how evaluation might give us a grasp of content. We have no hope of being able to evaluate a use of the sentence until we have some inkling as to the part played by the words in determining correct performance with that sentence. When we grasp the point of a truth predicate we do not merely learn to nod our heads in approval at some series of sounds but not others, we also see that a series of sounds is a sentence and understand its significance as dependent on the significance of the phrases out of which it is composed. In other words, we learn to apply a truth predicate to a sentence if and only if things are as it says they are. For example, an English speaker learns to apply "is true" to "snow is white" if and only if snow is white. This, I take it, is

34 Nb. My use of ‘sentence’ it is not quite equivalent to the everyday use. As I use it, a sentence is what invariant across different types of linguistic act.

the reason for Frege's context principle, "never to ask the meaning of a word in isolation, but only in the context of a proposition" (Frege, 1980, p. x). If we want to give an account of meaning we need to understand words as essentially the sort of thing that can make a systematic difference to the correct use of the sentences in which they can occur.

§5 The Route Map: Where Next for the Thesis

What follows is a brief outline of the structure of the thesis. The primary goal is to show that the practical capacity constraint combined with the explicit knowledge constraint implies that truth is a substantial, semantic property. By "semantic property" I, at this stage, mean no more than a property which belongs to something in virtue of its meaning. The interest in truth is that this is the property by which uses of sentences can be evaluated. A subsidiary aim is to show that our understanding of an evaluative, semantic truth predicate exhausts all that there is to truth. In doing this I will show that thinking and using language are only possible because there are practices of language use and thinking. I will show that this constrains what a theory of meaning can be like. That of course is revealing about the nature of any language.

What I am going to do is to use chapter 1 to show that both language use and thinking are rational activities. I will then show that one big dispute is about the nature of that rationality. In particular, the question is: is there a distinctive linguistic or mental procedural rationality? I will also show that how you answer that question depends on your view of language or thought. I will show that there are three broad approaches to language and three broad approaches to thought. I will also show that these approaches are analogous to each other. These approaches are: treating words and sentences or concepts and thoughts as empirical generalisations from the habits of language users or of thinkers; treating words and sentences or concepts and thoughts as abstract objects in their own right; and treating linguistic or mental items as abstract objects which are essentially part of a rational practice. I will also argue that whatever one's approach to language or thought, language use and thinking need to be modelled with a bipartite truth-conditional theory. What has been modelled by such theories depends on one's understanding of language and thought, but, because the activities are modelled by a

truth-conditional theory, claims about the nature of language use and thinking can be made in terms of claims about the nature truth. I am going to show that the possibility of explicit knowledge of content requires that truth is a substantial evaluative property of sentences. It will also show that a bipartite truth-conditional theory of meaning is a description of the procedural rationality of using a language. To do that the thesis breaks down as follows:

Chapter 1: Rational Activities

- Language use and thinking are rational activities.
- There are three broad approaches to the nature of language and the nature of thought.
- Irrespective of approach, the way the activity proceeds is described by a bipartite truth-conditional theory.
- The rationality of the language use/thinking and the nature of language/thought is determined by the nature of the truth predicate used in the relevant truth conditional theory.

Chapter 2: Force and Significance

- Minimalist views cannot explain our explicit grasp of content
- Traditional Correspondence views cannot explain our abilities to evaluate language use and thinking.
- Intentionality is a substantial and intrinsic property of truth-bearers

Chapter 3: Thought Priority

- Our access to mental content requires understanding linguistic representation
- The meaning of an utterance must be independent of what a speaker means by the utterance
- Truth must be the substantial property that accounts for our grasp of content
- Rules out all forms of redundancy theories and all forms of interpretive theories of truth.

Chapter 4: Linguistic Property

- Rules for thinking cannot be in force for ground floor thinkers, but they can be for ground floor language users
- Rules out pragmatic phenomenalism, and defends a linguistic practice view.
- Truth is a substantial evaluative property of language use

Chapter 1
Rational Activities

The challenge of the thesis is twofold. The first fold is to give the correct account of the nature of language and the nature of thought. The second fold is to show how the correct account of the nature of language and the nature of thought reveals the nature of truth. Those two folds are brought together in a defence of a version of the linguistic priority thesis:

LPT: Truth is, in the first instance, a substantial, evaluative property of sentences.

The thought encapsulated by LPT is that, although both sentences and mental states have content, it is through our understanding of sentences that we come to an understanding of our mental states. In particular, it is by understanding truth as a substantial and evaluative property of sentences that we come to an understanding of sentential content. It is then through that understanding that we are able to make sense of mental states as propositional attitudes with contents. If that is right, then reflective understanding both of how things are in the world and of how the world strikes us requires understanding the meaning of sentences.

In this chapter, I am going to show that a philosophical account of meaning must do more than give an analysis of the nature of meaning. It must also do more than to put the theorist in a position to state the meaning of any sentence of a language. Instead, a philosophical account of meaning makes sense of what it is to use language. I am also going to show that doing that requires making sense of using language as a rational activity. The same thing goes for a philosophical account of the mind. Such an account must do more than give an analysis of the nature of thought, and do more than put one in a position to state the content of any possible thought. Instead, it must make sense of the rational activity of thinking. It turns out that whatever one's preferred conception of language or thought, a bipartite truth conditional theory has some role to play in accounting for the activities of using language and thinking. However, the connection between such a theory and the project of accounting for the relevant activity varies with your conception of the activity in question. One part, in a bipartite theory, is an account

of the sorts of things that uses of language or acts of thinking can do. The other part is an account of the content of those actions. The bipartite theory is a truth conditional one when both the types of action and the contents are captured using a truth predicate. However, it turns out that, whatever one's view of the relevant activity, there will always be a truth conditional reformulation of the bipartite theory available.

However, a bipartite truth-conditional theory of the relevant activity is not sufficient to elucidate what we need to know. We also require a philosophical gloss on those theories[35]. A bipartite theory captures what is done by any possible move in the activity, but it takes for granted that we already understand what it is to do any of those things. A complete account of either language use or thinking requires making sense of what is done by the various moves in the relevant activity. But, because each action is described using a truth predicate, the dispute over the correct gloss on a bipartite theory comes out as a dispute over what it is for a sentence or thought to be true. In other words, different understandings of the activities are, in fact, different understandings of the nature of truth.

The two key questions are:

Q1. What is it to have a truth value?

Q2. What are the primary bearers of truth?

Those two questions are at the heart of the philosophical puzzle about truth. However, as a bipartite truth-conditional theory of meaning or thought is an expression of the explicit knowledge of the theorist, one test of the adequacy of her accounts of the two activities is whether or not they are compatible with explicit knowledge of those theories. As a result, the explicit knowledge constraint provides a way of answering the central philosophical questions about truth.

The strategy in this chapter is as follows: I am going to develop and defend an understanding of Michael Dummett's slogan, "a theory of meaning is a theory of understanding" (see, for example, Dummett, 1993, p. 3). This will show that the interest, in the first instance, is not in the natures of meaning and thought content, but in the possibility of using and understanding language and in the possibility of thinking and understanding thoughts. The next stage is to show that what we need for those

35 For a good defence of this claim see Davies, 1981, pp. 3-6.

projects are accounts of language use and thinking (section 1). I then discuss the nature of rational activities (section 2). I use that account to show that, whatever one's view of language, language use is a rational activity (section 3). I then show that language use can be modelled by a bipartite truth conditional theory (section 4). Thinking is also a rational activity, and can also be modelled by a bipartite truth conditional theory (section 5). The final stage is to bring together different approaches to the nature of language and thought and the rationality of language use and thinking to show how they result in different accounts of truth (section 6).

§1 A Theory of Meaning is a Theory of Understanding

John Foster once wrote:

> Thus what began as the demand for an account of linguistic competence turns out to be the demand for a theory of meaning for English – a theory which give the meaning of each English expression on the basis of its structure. This is hardly surprising. The meaning is precisely what fills the slot that the epistemic character of competence creates. However elaborate its philosophical ramifications, however lofty is ontological representation, meaning resides in just those facts about a language which its mastery implicitly recognizes.
>
> (Foster, 1976, p. 1)

Foster was not being parochial. Foster had no particular interest in the linguistic competence of speakers of English. His interest was in the way that an account of linguistic competence in a particular language revealed just that which he wanted to know about the nature of meaning. Here Foster was following Dummett in holding that "a theory of meaning is a theory of understanding" (Dummett, 1993, p. 3). Unfortunately, this slogan is rather gnomic. It needs unpacking.

There are two ways of reading Dummett's slogan, and Dummett, I will show, is rightly committed to both:

S1. A theory of meaning for a language is a theory of that which is understood by a competent speaker of that language.

S2. A theory of meaning for a language is an account of what it is to understand a language.

As will emerge, the S1 reading holds that a theory of meaning is a theory of understanding in the sense that the proper object of a theory of meaning is that which is

understood by competent speakers. The S2 reading emerges because what we want from an understanding of meaning is not just a way of specifying what is understood by competent speakers, but also knowledge of what we have specified. If successful, what we specify are the meanings of the expressions of a language, but what we want is insight into meaning. We get that insight by making sense of linguistic competence, which is to say by having an account of what it is to understand a language. I am going to reserve the term "theory of meaning" for the more narrow project of specifying the meaning of any sentence in the language, and use "account of meaning" for the project that locates such theories in an account of linguistic competence.

What we want is an understanding of meaning. But, not just any account of meaning will do. For example, even if we are prepared to countenance such ideal entities as meanings, we are not given any insight into the meaning of even the most simple sentences by being told that sentences are meaningful because they are ways of expressing such entities as meanings. We would still need an account of what it is for something to be a meaning. At this point it is tempting to reach for analysis. Perhaps there is something we can say which will elucidate what a meaning is. This is by no means a benighted project. Indeed, at various points in the thesis I am going to examine theories that have a view about what a meaning might be. However, by itself such a theory does not tell us what it is that we want to know. It is words and sentences that are meaningful. If we accept that words and sentences are meaningful by having meanings, then, even if we have a clear idea about what a meaning is, we still need an account of what it is for the objects that we use in speaking and writing to have the meanings that they do.

It might be thought that one could account for words and sentences having the meanings that they do if one could provide constraints on translation. The hope is that, because one already speaks a language, thinking about what is required to translate your language into another or another language into it will elucidate what it is for a word or a sentence to have a meaning. But, as Davidson wrote:

> In the general case, a theory of translation involves three languages: the object language, the subject language, and the metalanguage (the languages from and into which translation proceeds, and the language of the theory, which says what expressions of the subject language translate which expressions of the object language). And in this general case, we can know which sentences of the subject language translate which sentences of

> the object language without knowing what any of the sentences of either language mean (in any sense, anyway, that would let someone who understood the theory interpret sentences of the object language). If the subject language happens to be identical with the language of the theory, then someone who understands the theory can no doubt use the translation manual to interpret alien utterances; but this is because he brings to bear two things he knows and that the theory does not state: the fact that the subject language is his own, and his knowledge of how to interpret utterances in his own language.
>
> (Davidson, 2001, p. 129)

These two thoughts bring the problem sharply into view. A philosophical account of meaning must do more than have an account of meaningfulness. It must also do more than provide a way of giving the meaning of expressions in a particular language. A philosophical account of meaning needs to show how language works. This is where the slogan comes into play. As Dummett writes:

> To grasp the meaning of an expression is to understand its role in the language: a complete theory of meaning for a language is, therefore, a complete theory of how the language functions as a language. Our interest in meaning, as a general concept, is, thus, an interest in how language works; a direct description of the way a language works – of all that someone has to learn to do when he learns the language – would, accordingly, resolve our perplexities in a way in which an indirect account, by means of a translation, cannot.
>
> (Dummett, 1993, p. 2)

But note that what Dummett wants is an account of "all that someone has to learn *to do* when he learns the language" (*loc*. *cit*.). That we do things with sentences is the first thought on the way to the view that an account of meaning is a theory of understanding in the S2 sense. Not everything that we do with sentences depends on their being meaningful. For example, we can sing lullabies to put babies to sleep. However, some of that which we are able to do with sentences depends on the fact that they are meaningful. The things that we do with sentences which depend on their being meaningful are the things that we have to learn to do when we are developing linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is, thus, a matter of being able to recognise and respond to the meaningfulness of utterances. Hence, Foster's claim that "meaning is precisely what fills the slot that the epistemic character of competence creates" (*loc. Cit.*).

An account of meaning is, then, an account of how language works. It should

make sense of the meaning of each linguistic item in such a way that it makes sense of how the meaning of that item affects what can be done with it. An account of meaning will then encompass a theory of understanding in the S1 sense; it will encompass a theory of that which is understood by competent speakers. However, it achieves this by being an account of linguistic competence. It is a description of the understanding of competent speakers, a theory of understanding in the S2 sense. This is not to say that it is an account of the mental processes that issue in the ability to speak and understand a language. Instead, what we want is a theoretical representation, a model, of the ability to use language.

What we want from such a model is something that makes sense of what speakers can do when they have competence in a language. There is something systematic about this competence, so there must be some facts and features of language use that competent speakers are recognising and responding to. The aim of the theorist is to give an account of those facts and features in such a way that it captures what a speaker is able to do. Trivially, this will be a description such that, if you understood it, the only barrier preventing you from using your understanding to speak the language would be your all too human inability to turn theoretical knowledge into practical action. As Dummett puts it, "by stating what someone would have to know if he were thereby to be able to understand the language, we characterize what it is that a speaker is able to do" (Dummett, 1993, p. 134).

Now, Dummett, unlike, for example, Davidson (see, for example, 1985), is committed to the view that what speakers understand are languages. At this stage, it would be prejudicial for me to accept Dummett's view. The alternative view is that what we understand is how our interlocutors are using their words. Of course, Davidson does not think that we can understand everybody with equal facility, and Dummett does not think that we do not also understand what our fellow language users wish to convey. The real dispute between Dummett and Davidson is a dispute over the position of a theory of meaning in an account of linguistic competence. However, that comes out, in part, in a disagreement over the proper object of a theory of meaning. For Davidson, what we model are the idiolects of particular speakers at particular times, and for Dummett, French, English, Swahili and other actual languages. So, given that on all sides of this dispute a theory of meaning aims to give an interpretation of some

interpretable object, the need for an account of meaning to be a description of linguistic competence provides the following constraint:

> **LCC:** an account of meaning should state what someone would have to know if they were thereby to be able to understand the target of that account.

An account of meaning will then take the following form. On the one hand there will be a way of specifying the significance of any expression, and on the other hand there will be a gloss that makes sense of what it is for an expression to have that significance. The former project is a theory of meaning in the narrow sense. It is a theory of that which is understood by competent speakers. For reasons which will emerge, the theory of meaning will be a bipartite theory of meaning. The first part is a specification of the sort of things that can be done linguistically by using sentences. The second part is a specification of the content of those sentences by reference to the significance of sub-sentential parts. Such a theory would put the theorist in a position to specify what could be done by any use of a sentence by making sense of the contributions made by sub-sentential expressions. By itself, such a theory is very thin. It needs fleshing out into an account of meaning by describing the activity of using a language. That description will take a view as to what it is for a sentence to be meaningful. There are many views available. However, whatever the view adopted, what the theorist needs to do is account for the different kinds of things that can be done linguistically by using language and account for how the words used make a difference to what is actually done by uses of language by making sense of what it is to understand a language. To do so, the theorist needs to provide a model of linguistic competence.

Similar problems bedevil a philosophical account of thinking. Thinking is an activity. A creature that is thinking is a creature which is responding to the world in a minimally autonomous way. There is a sense, then, in which a creature which is thinking is a creature which is making sense of the world. It has things that it wants, and it is capable of recognising features of the world. It puts that recognition to use in furthering its own projects. Thinking proceeds by the adoption of propositional attitudes. A propositional attitude is a possible mental state of a thinker. As a thinking creature is one that is making sense of the world, a propositional attitude is an attitude about a way for things to be. There is more than one type of propositional attitude

(belief and desire are the two classic examples). It is possible to adopt a different type of propositional attitude to the same way for things to be, and, it is possible to have attitudes of a single type about a whole range of ways for things to be. Which situation a propositional attitude is about is given by specifying its content. I call the content of a propositional attitude a "thought"[36].An account of thinking needs to do more than attribute propositional attitudes to a thinker. It is an account of the mentality of a particular agent. It needs to make sense of the types of propositional attitudes which that agent can adopt and show what thoughts the agent can have as the contents of those propositional attitudes. It also needs an account of what it is to adopt those propositional attitudes with those contents. That is, it needs to be an account of the agent's minimally autonomous abilities to recognise and respond to the world.

The overall aim of a philosophical account of thinking is to be a description of the mentality of a thinker. It needs to make sense of what a creature is doing when it is exercising its minimal autonomy in response to its environment. It is quite straightforwardly a theory of the understanding of the subject. However, in order to achieve its overall aim an account of thinking needs to have a view on two things. The first thing is a view as to what it is that the subject can think. The second thing is a view as to what it is to be a thinker. The first part of that project is fulfilled by giving an account of the types of propositional attitudes a subject can adopt and the contents of those attitudes. Because thinking is a skill which is exercised when a minimally autonomous subject engages with the world, this part of the account tells us what features of the world the subject can respond to and in which ways she can respond. For reasons that will become apparent, this is achieved by building a two part theory. I will reserve the phrase "theory of thought" for these bipartite theories. A bipartite theory specifies what types of attitudes a thinker can adopt and what thoughts can be the

36 Throughout I am going to use the Fregean term "thought" to talk about that which can be the content of a possible propositional attitude. This is not because I am a Fregean. It is because the alternative is "proposition". It seems to me that "proposition" suffers from an accretion of theoretical baggage. In particular, people have held sentences to express propositions. I want to keep the mental realm as separate as possible from the linguistic. As a result, I need a terminology to talk about the mental that is as far from the terminology we use to talk about language as possible. Frege's use of "thought" (or more accurately "Gedanke") somewhat undermines this endeavour (see Frege 1948, ff. pp. 214-215, 1956, ff. p. 292 and 1963, ff. pp. 1-2). However, "thought" still has less theoretical accretions than "proposition", and quite clearly denotes something mental.

contents of those attitudes. It does so by putting the theorist in a position to specify specify the systematic difference that each attitude makes to the activity of thinking. A full philosophical account of thinking is achieved by giving a gloss on a bipartite theory. The gloss make sense of what it is to have those propositional attitudes. This needs to be an account of the understanding of the thinker. It should make sense of what it is for an attitude to be about a situation and how each attitude can make a systematic difference to the way the subject responds to the world.

An account of thinking is an account of that which is there to be understood in the practical abilities of an agent. That requires us to make sense of the way the world strikes the subject of the account. The constraint on an account of thinking is that one who understands the account must be able, with the relevant practical abilities, to be able to think like the subject of the account. Those practical abilities are the unique sensory abilities of the subject in question, the sophistication of the subject's response and the ability to turn theoretical knowledge into practical action. The first two practical abilities are the abilities which an account of thinking is trying to model. The last is a constraint which acknowledges the difference between practical and theoretical knowledge. Just as, in general, one does not speak by first looking up meanings in the dictionary, one does not think by appeal to a theory of thought.

In the remainder of this chapter, I am going to show that both using a language and thinking are rational activities. The next task is to show that those activities are modelled, in part, using a bipartite truth-conditional theory. I then show that the account of the activity is completed with a philosophical gloss on the theory. This gloss takes the form of a dispute over the nature and home of truth. In the remainder of the thesis, I use the explicit knowledge constraint to demonstrate the right ways of thinking about using language and thinking. This is revealing about the nature of truth. However, before doing any of that I need to think a bit more about the nature of a rational activity. It is to this that I now turn.

§2 What is a Rational Activity?

The question of this section is: what is a rational action? I showed in the introduction that a rational action is an action undertaken by an agent. As an action, it

does something. So, it is also an event. To distinguish events initiated by agents from merely causal happenings I will label rational actions, "agent authored events". The distinguishing features of an agent authored event are that it is something done by an agent and that it is a response to reasons. This is to say, all reasons apply to actions[37].

Reasons apply to actions, but what is it for a reason to apply to an action? I am going to show that agent authored events may have grounds and will have consequences. This distinguishes them from mere causal events which have causes and effects. The distinction between grounds and consequences and causes and effects is that grounds and consequences are justifiers for actions. So, rational actions are part of a normative framework. As such, they can be evaluated by suitably placed observers.

2.1 Grounds and Consequences

I showed in the introduction that, because being responsive to reasons is the hallmark of agency, only agents are responsive to reasons. This being so, it is all and only agent authored events that are rational actions. Often, although not always, an agent authored event is a response to something. For example, the lab rat eats the cheese

37 This makes it look like there is no distinction between theoretical and practical reason. In a way, that is correct, and in a way incorrect. The way this is correct is that both theoretical and practical reasoning are skills. They are things that we do. The way that it is incorrect is that theoretical and practical reasoning are different skills. Practical reasoning is a way of navigating one's environment, and theoretical reasoning is a way of understanding one's environment. Consider the following syllogism:

1. If it rains tomorrow, the game will be called off.
2. It will rain tomorrow.

Therefore,

3. The game will be called off.

I take it that the argument is valid. 3 does indeed follow from 1 and 2. It does not follow that the conjunction of 1 and 2 is a reason for 3. Instead, the premises are reason for deriving, and hence for anyone who accepts them, believing the conclusion. They provide a reason for actions. In this case a reason for deriving 3, and, if believed, believing that the game will be called off. Somebody who has come to terms with syllogistic reasoning has come to terms with a skill. They have learned how to do something. In this case they have learned how to do simple theoretical reasoning.

because it is hungry and there is cheese in front of it. Here the lab rat's action is a response to the cheese being in front of it. Given the rat's project of assuaging its hunger, the presence of the cheese justifies the rat's behaviour. The presence of the cheese is a ground for the rat's behaviour.

Many actions are without grounds. For example, a person might spin on the spot, or recite a fragment of poetry[38]. This does not mean that the agent is not engaged with reasons. Any event makes a difference to the future course of events. However, more than the actual effects of an action need to be under consideration. Events have what I will label, 'an upshot'. The upshot of an action is both the effects of the action (what the action directly brings about), and also what performing the action rules out. The upshot of an agent authored event makes a difference to the justification of that event. The upshot of making an action is relevant to the justification of the performance because what it brings about or rules out can be good or bad, correct or incorrect. For example, in the game of football each team should do two things: they should score goals, and they should prevent the opposition from scoring goals. The game moves forward when one team achieves the harder of those two tasks – when they score a goal. What the players should do is determined by these two tasks. When the goalkeeper makes a save she has done what she should. The striker whose shot was blocked has failed to do what she should. If the striker scores, the analysis goes the other way round; the goalkeeper got things wrong, and the striker was correct.

Events which are not agent authored have upshots, and these upshots can be good or bad. This does not make such events rational actions. For example, when the wind blows rubbish into the gutter it has the effect that the street sweeper has to clean it up. The street sweeper's life has been made more difficult by the wind, so, at least from her perspective, the event is a bad thing. But the behaviour of the wind is not correct or incorrect because it is not an agent. A severe drought is a bad thing. At worst it can lead to famine, at best it can lead to increased food prices which negatively impact on poor people. However, as the weather is not an agent authored action, it is neither justified

38 It is of course possible to provide a rationalisation of such behaviour. One might think that such an action was done because it was fun, or because the agent wanted to find out what would happen if she did such a thing. Undoubtedly, sometimes this is the case, but sometimes such rationalisations are post hoc.

nor unjustified. I am going to use the word "consequence" to mark the upshot of an agent authored event. In this terminology, only agent authored events have consequences. Events like the wind blowing or severe drought have upshots, but they do not have consequences. In a similar way it is only agent authored events that have grounds. The prolonged period of high pressure causes the drought, but it does not ground it. The famine, on the other hand, does provide a ground for people to ship foodstuffs to the affected area. We ought to help our fellow humans when we can; it is a project we should undertake. So, actions that further that project are justified.

In summary, rational actions are all and only agent authored events which may have grounds and will have consequences. Grounds and consequences are both potential justifiers for actions. Grounds provide reasons for undertaking a particular course of action because they are justifiers for that course of action. Consequences are the upshot of undertaking a particular course of action. They provide reasons for and against undertaking a particular course of action because what an action brings about and what it rules out makes a difference to the justification for performing the action.

2.2 Warrant and Evaluation

I turn now to warrant and evaluation. If an action has a ground, that is at least a *pro tanto* reason for performing the action. Assuming the lab rat is out looking for cheese, there being a piece of cheese in front of it is a reason for the lab rat to eat the cheese. The cheese is a ground for the action. One of the consequences of the action is that the lab rat gets fed. As eating is one of the rat's projects, that consequence provides a *pro tanto* reason for the action. A warranted action is an action which it is acceptable to perform. So, assuming there are no countervailing circumstances, the action is warranted. If eating the cheese is going to result in the rat being caught in a trap, then the rat really should refrain from eating the cheese. I am assuming that the rat has an overriding aim of staying alive. If there are no countervailing consequences of eating the cheese, the rat has a warrant for eating the cheese. However, countervailing consequences can undermine that warrant. It is possible for an action to be warranted which lacks grounds. For example, Meg likes to sing in the shower. She finds herself

doing this one day as she scrubs away. I am going to assume that her singing is not a response to anything. It has fairly minimal consequences because it does not make much difference to anything else, but it does bring her pleasure which is a good thing. It has some other consequences because it is incompatible with various different courses of action. For example, it is incompatible with her thinking about her day ahead. However, there is plenty of time for Meg to do that later. Its consequences do not make the action impermissible. We do not need a reason to undertake an action, and, if undertaking that action does not prevent us from doing something that we have to do, the action is permissible. Meg's singing in the shower is a warranted action. However, it is a warranted action which lacks grounds. An action is warranted either when the situation is such that the action should occur, or when the warrant comes for free because there is no countervailing reason which means that the action should not occur.

Because it is rational actions that are warranted or not, and because there are three distinct dimensions to rationality – hypothetical, categorical and procedural – there are three classes of warrant. An agent authored event can be warranted in the hypothetical dimension. In this dimension the warrant depends on the project in hand. It can also be warranted in the categorical dimension. The warrant depends on its categorical moral status. Finally, it can be warranted with respect to a practice. The warrant depends on the permissibility of the action in the practice. Actions that can be warranted can be explicitly evaluated. Explicit evaluation is a matter of gaining explicit knowledge of warrants. As there are three classes of warrant, evaluation can also be done in all three dimensions.

§3 Using Language

In this section I am going to show that the activity of using language is a rational activity. The long-term aim is to show that modelling that activity will involve a bipartite truth conditional theory of meaning, or a theory of meaning that is equivalent to a bipartite truth conditional one. The reason is that, whatever one's view of language and language use, there is more to the activity of using language than the endless projects in which linguistic activity features. In addition to the point of a use of

language, what there is to be understood is a linguistic act. A linguistic act presents a content with a particular force. Because truth is a device of semantic ascent, any account of content is also an account of the truth conditions of a sentence with that content. Sentences are used to present contents with particular forces, so, equally, any account of what it is to present a content with a particular force is also an account of what it is to present the truth of a sentence with that force. So, without any commitment to truth being a substantial semantic property and irrespective of your view about what it is to use language, for any language, there will be a bipartite truth-conditional theory of meaning[39]. In order to make it clear that, on any view of language, there is something to be modelled, I first need to show that, whatever you think about meaning, linguistic competence is a circumscribable rational ability. This last task is the aim of section 3.

3.1 Using Language is a Rational Activity

Many uses of language, those uses of language which are uses by humans, are agent authored. This suggests that they are rational actions. There are, of course, uses of language which are not agent authored, and so not all uses of language are rational actions. However, there would be no possibility of non-agent authored uses of language, if using language was not something that human beings did. Uses of language by humans are, in the main, intentional actions. Intentional actions are rational actions as they have grounds and consequences. For example, Reuben might greet his friend, Maria, with a cheery "good morning". In doing so, he will have a purpose for his action, and it will be part of at least one project. Simplifying things slightly, Reuben's greeting is part of the project of striking up a conversation with Maria. Reuben's action achieves this end. Thus that consequence justifies the action. Reuben also has the wider project of maintaining his friendship. If he is to maintain his friendship, he needs to be polite to his friend. As a result, the presence of his friend grounds Reuben's action.

However, uses of language can be distinguished from other intentional actions, although it is not easy to demarcate the difference. Dummett's slogan, "a theory of

39 The phrase "bipartite theory" is taken from John McDowell's "Truth-Conditions, Bivalence, and Verificationism" (McDowell, 1998b, p. 6).

meaning is a theory of understanding", is helpful here. By making the proper aim of a theory of meaning the making of a model of a speaker's ability to use and understand language, we are able to locate what is special about uses of language. Reflective users of language are able to understand uses of language that fall within their domain of expertise without reference to the purposes of a particular speaker[40]. A good example would be a piece of poetry (or even this essay). Furthermore expert speakers are able to understand many novel uses of language. There are two dimensions to this novelty. The first dimension is the ability to understand uses of language they have not previously encountered. The second dimension is the ability to understand familiar uses of language in novel situations. Expertise in both dimensions requires the ability to recognise structure in uses of language, and the ability to class together different linguistic performances as performances of the same type. This ability requires there to be a systematic nature to language use. However, the two dimensions of novelty mean that the systematic nature of language use cannot be captured solely in terms of the projects of the language user and the causes of her utterances.

The basic problem is that, because of the two types of novelty, competent speakers know what their interlocutors have said. But, even if we grant competent language users access to the projects of their interlocutors, what has been said is not captured in terms of the grounds and consequences of an utterance. When Maria understands Reuben's cheery greeting, she understands that it is a wish for her to have a good morning. In this instance, the utterance is grounded partly by the presence of Maria, and partly by Reuben's desire to have a conversation with her. Having access to Reuben's purposes does not thereby allow Maria to understand Reuben's utterance. Imagine that the conversation has come to an end. Reuben terminates the conversation with another good morning. If the friend is to understand this utterance, she needs to understand that it is a wish for her to have a good morning. This time it is grounded partly by Reuben's desire to terminate the conversation, and partly by English social conventions. Again, Maria can know that Reuben wishes to terminate the conversation without understanding what Reuben utters. The example can be multiplied indefinitely. The basic point is that nothing about the grounds and consequences of the utterance is going to explain why it is a wish for someone to have a good morning. The correct

40 My domain of expertise is English.

interpretation requires understanding what has been said. To deal with this problem the theorist of meaning must find space for some notion of the linguistic significance of a use of language. I am going to follow Davidson and call this first component, "the first meaning" of an utterance (Davidson, 1985, p. 474). The first meaning of an utterance is the linguistic significance of the utterance. On some views, that is the significance the utterance has within the language. On other views, that is the linguistic significance which that particular utterance has.

3.2 Point, Force and Content

Many uses of language serve the purposes of language using agents. These purposes are enormously diverse and, I suspect, open ended. It seems to me that the range of projects which could be furthered by using a bit of language is infinite. Here is an example. Ramona might wish to strike up a conversation, and so make a remark about the state of the weather. She might say, "the weather has turned warm at last". If she falls into conversation, her action can be deemed a success, and her behaviour correct. Here she has used an assertion, *that the weather has turned warm at last*, to bring about a conversation. The purpose of a linguistic performance does not depend on the sentence used. For example, Curtis might say to Avis, "have you had enough to drink?" This could be said in order to elicit information. Perhaps Curtis is worried that his guests are not well enough watered. On the other hand, it could also be a way of preventing Avis from drinking any more; imagine Curtis as irritated with Avis' drinking. It is worth stressing that in this dimension it is also possible to evaluate 'straightforward' uses of language. Verity might wish to assert that the daffodils are cheerful. If she does it by uttering, "the daffodils are cheerful", she will have succeeded in asserting that the daffodils are cheerful.

Uses of language are actions. But, in addition to being, for example, ways of gaining affection, they are also distinctively linguistic actions. To see this consider that, as already noted, linguistic competence varies depending on one's linguistic environment. At home, competent speakers use and respond to language with ease. Unless they have put in a lot of work, they struggle abroad. One way of explaining this is to hold that the first meaning of a use of a sentence has nothing to do with the

intentions of the language user. On a view like this, speakers are seen as using sentences, and those sentences are seen as being meaningful because they are constructed from a meaningful vocabulary. The first meaning of an utterance is then treated as being this linguistic meaning. However, on this view of utterances, languages provide ways of performing an infinite number of linguistic actions. Those actions are performed by combining words together to form sentences. Learning to speak is learning how a language works, which is to say learning which combinations of words form which linguistic actions. Of course, in some ways much more important than understanding language, is understanding other people. On a view like this, people use their linguistic abilities to understand the language used by their interlocutors, and then use that information to understand what their interlocutors are up to by using a sentence with a particular meaning.

However, one can resist appeal to linguistic meaning and still respect the obvious point that understanding language use requires a peculiar form of linguistic competence. But doing so requires that there is more to understanding each other than divining the non-linguistic purposes that a speaker might have for using language in the way that she does. You also have to work out what it is that your interlocutor has said. At best, knowledge of their non-linguistic projects might give you some clues as to the correct interpretation of their utterance, but what successful interpretation gives you is knowledge of which speech act has been performed, not their non-linguistic purposes for performing such an act. That is, understanding an utterance requires working out what a speaker means by the sounds that she makes. McDowell, who adopts this latter line, puts the point like this:

> The primary communicative intention is the intention, for instance, to say such-and-such to the audience. The appropriate mutual awareness is the awareness that the speaker has indeed said such-and-such to the audience. Speech acts are publications of intentions; the primary aim of speech acts is to produce an object – the speech act itself – that is perceptible publicly, and in particular to the audience, embodying an intention whose content is precisely a recognisable performance of that very speech act. Recognition by an audience that such an intention has been made public in this way leaves nothing further needing to happen for the intention to be fulfilled.
>
> (McDowell, 1998b, p. 41)

On this view of language use, speakers have both linguistic and non-linguistic

intentions. Their linguistic intention is an intention to perform a speech act. It is these speech acts which competent users of a language can understand. They do so by being able to understand their interlocutors linguistic intentions. The first meaning of an utterance is determined by how the speaker is correctly interpreted. It is a matter of what she is trying to say by using those words in those ways to make that utterance. Linguistic meaning is a by-product of the advantage of having relatively stable ways of using words to say the kind of things that speakers want to say.

However, the 'linguistic meaning first' and 'speaker meaning first' views are not as distant as might at first seem. The reason is that, even in the linguistic meaning first case, competent language use requires choosing what to say. A competent speaker still has linguistic intentions. She might want, for example, to assert that daffodils are pretty. She knows a way of doing that. She might use the sentence, "daffodils are pretty". An interlocutor who understands the utterance has, not only understood the utterance, but also thereby recognised the speaker's linguistic intentions. The important point is that whether or not first meaning is linguistic meaning, using language requires knowing how to say what you want to say and understanding what other people wanted to say. Given that, not only is using language a rational activity in that it furthers people's non-linguistic projects, speakers also have linguistic projects which give them reasons for speaking as they do. Those reasons are hypothetical reasons. If I want to use English to assert that daffodils are pretty, then I should choose from a range of utterances among which will be a use of "daffodils are pretty". If I am to understand English, I need to understand the right ways of saying all the things I might want to say. I need to understand what is correct about saying "daffodils are pretty" as a way of asserting that daffodils are pretty. Different views of meaning have different views as to what it is that makes an utterance correct. Further down the line, we will see that many of those views are not adequate to the task in hand.

On any view of language, using language is a matter performing linguistic actions. These actions are things like assertions, questions, orders and so on. They are distinguished from non-linguistic actions simply by being the moves by which the activity of using language proceeds. However, the idea that a use of language performs a distinct linguistic action also brings with it the idea that the action has a content. After all, a question is a demand for a particular bit of information, an order is a demand that

something particular happens, and so on. In addition to recognising the purpose of intentional utterances, linguistic competence requires understanding the linguistic significance of uses of language. That is, to be able to recognise and respond to an action with a content. The linguistic significance of a use of a sentence depends on what might, pre-theoretically, be called "the grammar" and "the meaning" of the bit of language used. For example, the meaning of "I am playing cricket" depends on the words used, the way it is put together and morphological features of the words used. By playing the permutations with word order, morphology and word use, speakers can use language to perform innumerable different linguistic actions.

The take-home message is that whatever one's view of language use, there needs to be a tripartite distinction between the content, the force and the point of an utterance. The point of an utterance is the purpose for which it is undertaken. The force of an utterance is the type of linguistic action that has been performed. The content of an utterance is what is presented with a variety of forces. Here is a way of drawing the distinction: there are assertions that such and such is the case, questions as to if it is the case that such and such, orders for it to be brought about that such and such is the case, and so on. What precedes the that-clause is the force, and the that-clause is the content[41].

41 This mirrors and is inspired by Dummett's distinction between sense, force and point (Dummett, 1993, p. 108). However, I do not wish to be committed to anything as technical as sense. The same point could be made by using JL Austin's distinction between the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary (Austin, 1962, pp. 91-103). The major reason I have phrased things as the distinction between point, force and content is that I am much more familiar with the work of Dummett and I am with the work of Austin. However, there are also philosophical reasons. "Illocutionary", "illocutionary" and "illocutionary" are terms of art. The distinction I wish to make is not the same as Austin's. My use of "point" is more wide-ranging than Austin's "perlocutionary". Austin seems to want the perlocutionary aspect of an utterance to be a matter of a speech act's effects on its recipient. These might be such things as convincing someone or scaring someone. Austin also wishes to exclude non-interpersonal consequences, such as producing something beautiful or making echoes, from any of those classes (*ibid*. 102-103). I am happy to include anything for the sake of which somebody uses a sentence in the point of that use. It also seems to me that in Austin's sense there will be perlocutionary aspects that are unintended. If I shout, "the train is leaving" because I have been daydreaming and am shocked by my trains imminent departure , as I have it, there is no point to my act. However, if you are startled by my utterance, then you being startling is its perlocutionary aspect (*ibid*. p. 106).

3.3 Three Views of Language

There are, broadly speaking, three approaches to the nature of language. These distinctions will turn out not to be the most helpful way of thinking about language use. In the end, questions about the nature of truth and the nature of truth-bearers are more revealing. However, it is helpful to have some way of thinking about the sort of views of the nature and status of languages that might emerge. The three broad views are:

(a) Use views

(b) Meaning fact views

(c) Linguistic practice views.

(a) Use views treat a language as an empirical generalisation from the habits of speakers. As I will show in the next chapter, use theorists disagree on what constitutes use. The dispute is over which concepts can figure in an account of use. In particular, they disagree about whether or not semantic concepts are indispensable in an account of use[42]. On such views, talk of words, sentences and languages is useful in explaining and

Furthermore, Austin, being interested in linguistic philosophy, introduces his distinctions in order to make sense of the huge number of things that we do by using sentences. He is suspicious of the attempt to regiment language in the way attempted by Dummett and others. This comes out in Austin's rejection of the significance of assessment of speech acts in terms of truth and falsity. For Austin, truth and falsity are, on occasion, suitable for assessing speech acts, but need have no special place in the elucidation of meaning (*ibid*. pp. 146-147). Austin, it seems to me, wishes, with his distinction, to remove theories of meaning from the centre of the philosophy of language. They are to be replaced by careful consideration of all the multifarious illocutionary acts that speakers go in for. Following Dummett (1993, pp. 107-110), it seems to me that we cannot make sense of speaker understanding unless we privilege truth and falsity. At the bare minimum, as Austin acknowledges by introducing talk of the locutionary, speakers need to understand that the locutionary aspect of a use of a sentence, the content, is true in such and such circumstances. But, as will emerge, we cannot make sense of the notion of truth except in terms of the possibility of evaluating linguistic acts, and in particular of assertion. But, that does mean that we need to privilege truth and falsity in the way that we evaluate language use. It also means that we need to distinguish between the point, force and content of the use of a sentence. It would be both misleading and unfair to Austin to use his labels here.

42 This leaves my use of "use theorist" somewhat heterodox. In general, a use theory is taken to be one that tries to account for semantic properties in terms of dispositions to produce utterances. For my purposes, I find my taxonomy more useful. Brian Loar (1982, p. 272) and Jennifer Hornsby (1989, p.

predicting speaker behaviour. The next question a use theorist has to face concerns the nature and status of languages. On one way of developing the view, speakers do not understand a language; they understand each other. A language becomes part of an empirical theory about speaker behaviour[43]. The other way of developing the view maintains that speaker behaviour is primary, but that it is such as to give rise to stable regularities of use. These stable regularities of use are languages. Because each expression in the language has a use, it is meaningful irrespective of the purposes of particular language users, and linguistic competence requires getting to grips with those regularities. On both developments of the view, as the whole thing is grounded in the purposes of language users, it makes means-end rationality fundamental to language use both in respect to what has been done by a use of language and what an expression means. There are no linguistic norms which govern language use. An utterance is correct if and only if it achieves its purpose; from a linguistic point of view, there is no right thing to say.

In brushstrokes so broad that they blur crucial distinctions between different views, on the no-such-thing-as-language-view, the idea is that what people have to do is understand each other. They produce utterances and inscriptions for a variety of purposes. However, it is distinctive of the possibility of success in the varied projects for which people use language that the utterances and inscriptions have a content. That content is a matter of what the utterer means by the words on that occasion of utterance. That is a matter of what she is best understood as saying on that occasion. The first meaning of an utterance is then a matter of how the words used on that occasion are correctly understood. At least for a core class of expressions, when circumstances are similar, language users tend to use the same expressions for the same purposes. These regularities of intentional performance are such that conventional ways of performing linguistic acts are instigated. Those conventions are not just at the level of whole sentences. They are also at the level of sub-sentential expressions. The conventions for using sub-sentential expressions are such that sub-sentential expressions can be seen as making a systematic difference to what would conventionally be done by whole

561) both acknowledge the possibility of doing things my way.

43 Grice (1959) provides one way of taking this line. Davidson provides a very different way. See, for example, Davidson, 2005, pp. 49-52, "Knowing One's Own Mind" (Davidson 2001c, p. 28), "The Social Aspect of Language" (1994) and "A Nice Derangement Of Epitaphs" (1985).

sentences in which they can occur. So, importantly, for any use of language there is something that, if language users regularly did that thing, that use of language would be a conventional way of doing that thing. Competent language users are taken to be such that they know what each use of language would conventionally do were it to be the common use. But, because language use is sophisticated in this way, language users are able to understand uses of language which are not agent authored events; they are able to understand what the non-authored uses would do if they were authored by an agent who would be liable to try to make herself understood like that.

On the languages-as-regularities development, the activity of communicating is still taken to be primary. However, the fact that we are able to communicate with each other is meant to give rise to languages, where a language is, roughly, a system meaning. Linguistic competence is a matter of using that meaningful entity in communication. The first meaning of an utterance is then its meaning in the language. One way of developing the position is to think that reflective linguistic competence requires some level of ersatz empirical theorising about languages. Languages develop, so the idea goes, as stable ways of doing certain things. On David Lewis's development of the view, they are stable conventions for fulfilling intentions (Lewis, 1979). On Ruth Millikan's development (1987), languages are "reproductively established families", the members of which have "proper functions" in such a way that sentences in their different moods perform all the linguistic acts one could want.

(b) Meaning fact views hold that the expressions of a language are meaningful in that there is a meaning fact for each expression in the language[44]. Expressions are meaningful but can be used in an indefinite number of ways for an indefinite number of purposes. So, although linguistic items are taken to be meaningful in their own right, thinking about language use is still an empirical undertaking. The theorist also needs an account of linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is a matter of being able to use a language for your purposes, and respond to other speakers' uses by recognising their purposes. So, an account of linguistic competence is an account of the way a language is used. Because, on these views, the meaning of an expression does not determine how it ought to be used, such views require an empirical theory of linguistic activity. The

44 David Wiggins labels such a view an "autonomy conception of meaning" (Wiggins, 1997, p. 508). Wiggins credits John Foster with having propounded the view as against Davidson (Foster, 1976). I think Wiggins is right in this attribution.

theorist looks for a basic regularity of use knowledge of which would explain speaker competence. In other words, meaning fact views do not differ from empirical generalisation views on their account of the rationality of language use or its evaluation. On these views, there are no linguistic norms governing language use. Instead, an utterance is correct in as much as it achieved its purpose. Explaining speakers' ability to understand non-rational uses of language is straightforward. Language users and computers are both using meaningful items. Linguistic competence requires the ability to grasp the significance of any use of a sentence. However, uses by language users are rational actions whereas uses by computers are not. On these views, meaning is independent of use, but what is done with a language is accounted for in terms of means-ends rationality.

Of course, theorists who adopt a meaning fact view are going to want some account of what constitutes these meaning facts. But, it is not so urgent as on use views. Irrespective of how languages develop, what develops is something that is meaningful. Competent speakers have to come to terms with the meanings of the words and sentences that they use. They are then able to use them to further their own particular projects. We also understand any understandable bit of language that we come across. Making sense of each other and making sense of why our interlocutors might say what they say is a separate project. The only developments of this view that I am aware of turn the trick by holding that there are things for a word or sentence to mean. I suspect that this is because they are impressed by the possibility of saying the same thing in different languages, and thus hold that there is a contingent connection between a word and its meaning. The most famous development of this sort of view is Frege's (Frege, 1948)[45].

(c) Linguistic practice views treat uses of language as significant because they are part of a rational practice. My own view of language is a linguistic practice view, as is Robert Brandom's (1998). One difference between my view and Brandom's is that Brandom has a deflationary view of truth where as I treat it as a substantial property. A rational practice is an activity instituted by a set of rules. The basic idea is that because there are rules which govern the making of speech acts, words and sentences are

45 I think that Anandi Hattiangadi has a version of this view (Hattiangadi, 2007). Wiggins (1997) provides another example.

significant. The thought is that a use of language can be correct or incorrect from the perspective of a particular linguistic practice. The next thought is that because there are procedurally correct or incorrect uses of language, each expression in a language has a linguistic significance. This is what is grasped by competent, reflective speakers.

It is important to note that on this sort of view the rules of the practice institute new possibilities for action. They do so by determining the grounds and the consequences of making that action. As a result, on this sort of view there can be a speech act without an actor. I am going to coin the phrase "language act" to avoid confusion with speech act theory. Language acts are actions within the practice of speaking a language. Competent language users avail themselves of those possibilities to use language to further their own purposes; understanding language is a matter of grasping the significance of language acts. There is an analogy with chess here. Chess consists of a series of chess acts. What those acts are gets to be determined by the rules which govern play. Chess players are then able to use those chess acts to further their own purposes. In the main, I suppose, chess players play to win. However, they may also play to explore the possibilities within the game, or even to send coded messages. Competence in chess requires grasping the significance of different chess acts given the position within the game; how you then use that competence is entirely up to you. Using language is a more complicated activity than playing chess. However, language users, like chess players, have to come to grasp the significance of different language acts given a particular context. Part of the complexity of the activity is that that context is extremely open-ended. It will involve what has just been written or said, but also how things are in the world. To make things more complex still, how things are in the world includes what has previously been written or said. Nevertheless, at heart linguistic competence is a matter of coming to terms with a set of rules that govern a particular linguistic practice.

It is worth noting, if only to set aside, that on all views of language there will also be categorical warrants. Because linguistic actions are significant, they have upshots. Most of those upshots will be morally neutral. Although, given the difficulties of living well, there will also be plenty of times when speakers are called upon to do the morally right thing by producing an utterance. For example, more often than not, if you have a need for some information that I possess, and you ask me for it, I should make a

true assertion that provides you with the information you require. More often than not, it would be wrong to lie[46]. There are less extreme examples. I think that the socially competent ought to try to include the socially awkward. This requires making conversation. Nothing turns on this claim. It is brought up party for the sake of accuracy, and partly to emphasise how embedded language use is in our day-to-day activities.

§4 Theories and Accounts of Meaning

I turn now to theories and accounts of meaning. The ability to use language is a practical capacity. There can be no more to meaning than is captured by the correct description of that capacity. As a result, the aim of the theorist is to provide an account of meaning which makes sense of the linguistic behaviour of the people who use a language by characterising what it is that speakers are able to do. That is, the theorist is aiming to provide a model of linguistic understanding. One thing that a description of that capacity needs to capture is what it is that competent users of that language understand. What is understood by competent speakers is the significance of any well-formed utterance. So, one thing that an account of meaning has to do is find a way of stating the significance of any well-formed utterance. This part of the project I have labelled a "theory of meaning". It should put the theorist in a position to state what would (standardly) be done by any use of language[47]. One's view of language does not

46 If you are a soldier and you are asking after the location of an innocent fugitive, it is not obvious that I should reveal the location of the fugitive to you. There are, of course, arguments to the contrary.

47 In what follows "(standardly)" will appear regularly. This is to mark the distinction between those who hold that there is a linguistic dimension to evaluation and those who deny one. Those who think that there is a linguistic dimension to evaluation think that a theory of meaning needs to account for the way a language is correctly used, which is to say they need to account for the way a linguistic practice works. From this linguistic perspective, it seems reasonable to suppress the "correctly". Those who deny that there is a linguistic dimension to evaluation think that a theory of meaning needs to account for the way that a language is standardly used, although of course standard use does not have to coincide with frequency of actual use. The theory of meaning will have to be sophisticated enough to account for the possibility of there being sentences which are never in fact used and sophisticated enough to deal with sentences that are so rarely used that they are in fact most commonly used in a non-standard way. Both parties go about constructing a theory of meaning in the

make a difference to the mechanics of building such a theory of meaning. It makes a difference to what the theorist of meaning takes the theory to have done. That is, it makes a difference to how you understand linguistic competence. On any view of language, the data to be modelled are the utterances of a particular group of speakers. As a result, a theory of meaning for a language is a description of what can be done by an utterance. The dispute is over the right way of making sense of such a description. That is, the dispute is over the way that meaning is located in the wider rational activity of navigating around the world. In summary, in this section, I will show that, whatever your view of language, an account of meaning needs to be frameable as a theory which gives the (standard) significance of any possible use of language together with a commentary that explains what it is to understand what is captured by such a theory.

4.1 Standard Use

Although, in the first instance, using language is a rational activity, except on rational practice views, that rationality is simply a product of the purposes for which people use language. On such views, there is no error involved in a spoonerism, solecism or deviation from the dictionary definition of a term. However, competent speakers are able to recognise when such things have occurred, even when it has no effect on their ability to understand their interlocutors. This is of a piece with competent speakers having a skill that they have had to learn. As already noted, it is that skill which the theorist of meaning wants to characterise. Again, as it is a skill that is being characterised, the characterisation needs to explain what it is to use language. I am going to use the term "standard use" to describe the regularity of use which best characterises this skill. It is important to note that the standard use, on this definition, does not mean the way an expression is most commonly used. Instead, it is a hypothetical abstraction from actual performance. The thought is that actual linguistic performances are regular enough that actual language use can display an enormous regularity and flexibility. Despite that, competent language users can make sense of uses

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same way. What they disagree about is the significance of what they have done when they have done it.

of language that are not agent authored. In addition, reflective speakers can give definitions of words in isolation and, if they see fit, police their own and other peoples linguistic behaviour according to the standard use. In other words, linguistic behaviour is such that there is a notion of the meaning of an utterance of a sentence that is independent of the speaker. The linguistic meaning of an expression is in part captured by the standard use of that expression. However, it is only on linguistic practice views that linguistic meaning brings with it procedural warrants.

If the theorist denies the existence of a linguistic dimension of evaluation, she will take possession of a philosophical account of meaning to put her in a position to say, for any given sentence, when that sentence is standardly introduced, and to say what the standard effect of using that sentence will be. Use theorists will take that to be part of an empirical theory of the linguistic behaviour of a group of speakers. Meaning fact theorists will take that to be part of an empirical theory about how groups of people operate with meanings. If, like me, the theorist acknowledges a linguistic dimension of evaluation, she will take her theory to put her in a position to state the grounds and the consequences of using any given sentence.

4.2 Semantic Role

What we want to know about meaning is captured by a description of the capacity to use and understand a language. Part of that description must make sense of what is understood by competent speakers of that language. This part of the account is a theory of meaning. The aim of a theory of meaning is, then, an account of the way each expression figures in the activity of speaking a language. I am going to call this feature "the semantic role" of an expression[48]. There are two components that need to be accounted for; they are: how an expression is used, and what is done with it when it is used. As the activity proceeds by the use of sentences, the key notion is the semantic role of sentences. The semantic role of a sentence is its systematic position in the

48 Once I have introduced the role of truth in theory of meaning, it should become apparent that my understanding of semantic role has been taken from Dummett. Dummett defines "semantic role" as follows, "the semantic role of an expression is that fact about it in virtue of which it contributes to determining the truth or falsity of any sentence in which it occurs" (Dummett, 1993, p 285).

activity of speaking a language. Without a linguistic dimension of rationality, the first component of an account of the semantic role of sentences requires a description of when a sentence is standardly introduced, and its effect on which sentences standardly will, might or won't come next. With a linguistic dimension, that is a description of when it is okay, compulsory or forbidden to use the sentence, and a description of what has to, may or must not happen next. This leaves the following as a criterion of identity on the semantic of sentences:

> **SRS**: Two sentences have the same semantic role if and only if they are everywhere interchangeable without affecting the rest of the activity.

However, not only sentences have a semantic role. Human languages are systematic. Sentences do not have a semantic role willy-nilly. There is an account of why each sentence has the semantic role that it does. The semantic role of a sentence is determined by the way it is constructed and what it is constructed from. That is, the semantic role of a sentence is determined by its sub-sentential parts and the way they are put together. This feature of a language also needs to be represented by a theory of meaning for that language. There is no (standard) ground or consequence for using a sub-sentential expression. This is because (standardly) nothing is done by the use of a sub-sentential expression. As a result, there is no linguistic dimension of rationality for using sub-sentential expressions because nothing linguistically has been done by the use of a sub-sentential expression.

However, on use views the semantic roles of sentences are determined by their construction because, as a matter of fact, the way sentences are standardly used depends on conventions for combining together sub-sentential parts. Competent speakers have to have come to terms with a large array of such conventions. A theory of meaning, on these views, requires an account of such conventions. Views which appeal to meaning facts take the semantic role of a sentence to be straightforwardly determined by the meaning of that sentence. They also assume that the meaning of a sentence is determined by the meaning of its parts. So, on these views, because the parts are meaningful they have a systematic effect on the way that sentences in which they occur tend to be used. Linguistic practice views are similar except that they understand "use"

as "is correctly used". On linguistic practice views, sub-sentential expressions make a systematic difference to the grounds and consequences of using a sentence. So, whichever view is adopted, a theory of meaning has to account for the systematic effect of using a sub-sentential expression. The systematic effect of using a sub-sentential expression has to be cashed out as the way the use of that expression affects the (standard) use of sentences in which it can occur. This systematic effect is the first component of the semantic role of a sub-sentential expression. So, the first component of the semantic role of a sub-sentential expression is captured by a description of its systematic contribution to the semantic roles of sentences in which it can occur. Thus, the following provides a criterion identity on the semantic role of a sub-sentential part:

SSP: Two sub-sentential parts have the same semantic role if and only if they are everywhere interchangeable without affecting the semantic roles of sentences in which they can occur.

4.3 Semantic Value

We need more than a description of how speakers tend to use/should use their language. We also want an account of what they have done when they have done it. This is the second component of semantic role. The sort of things that we do by using sentences are: make assertions, ask questions, issue orders and so on. Speakers perform these linguistic actions by using sentences. In order to understand what has been done linguistically by a particular utterance, a competent speaker needs to understand the (standard) significance of using any sentence. So, a theory of meaning aims to put the theorist in a position to say what is (standardly) done by a use of any sentence. What the theorist must show is, for example, why utterances of "humans are featherless bipeds" are (standardly) the assertion that humans are featherless bipeds, or utterances of "get thee to a nunnery" are (standardly) the order that the addressee should remove herself to a nunnery. Putting it schematically, a theory of meaning should put the theorist in a position to make claims with the following form:

A use of SENTENCE is (standardly) the LA that p

where 'SENTENCE' is the name of a sentence and LA is a stand-

> in for a type of linguistic act, and 'p' is a schematic variable ranging over sentences in use[49].

Now, as what is understood is both the content and the force of an utterance, a theory of meaning which puts the theorist in a position to state the (standard) content of any possible use of a sentence, the different forces uses of sentences can have and what makes a use of a sentence (standardly) have a particular force will provide the theorist with what she wants. In other words, if the theorist of meaning provides a theory of force and a theory of content, provided she can marry up her two parts, the theorist will be in a position to say what is standardly done by any use of a sentence.

Whatever view of truth is adopted, we can use truth to characterise both the nature of linguistic acts and their content. To see this consider that there is a strong equivalence between a claim, p (although note that 'p' is a sentence in use), and the claim that it is true that p. I will call this claim the 'equivalence thesis':

ET. It is true that p if and only if p.

But, if adding the operator "it is true that" to the front of the claim does not affect the truth value of that claim, then we can just as well make things explicit by reformulating ET as:

ET'. The claim that p is true if and only if p

The possibility of reformulating ET as ET' shows, as Michael Dummett pointed out (1981, p. 444), that any account of truth has to maintain the equivalence thesis, because without it, one could legitimately accept a claim without accepting the truth of what is claimed. This would have disastrous consequences for reasoning. It would be possible to accept a set of premises, and accept that a conclusion followed from those premises without accepting the conclusion because you would not have been shown a route from the truth of the premises to the conclusion, and, as yet, given no reason why you should accept the truth of the premises.

Whatever view of the nature of a sentence is adopted, we are able to make

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49 This is not to say that a theory of meaning aims to produce instances of such a schema as theorems. Indeed, as I am going to show, a theory of meaning will take a bipartite form. One part of such a theory will be a theory of content. The theorems will be statements of the truth conditions of sentences. The other part will be a theory of force. This will be an an account of what forces sentences can be used with and an account of the syntax of a language.

claims by using sentences. If a sentence is apt to make a claim, then the claim it is apt to make will be specified by giving its content. The content of a sentence will be specified by using a sentence (perhaps the very same one, or perhaps one suitably modified to take account of context sensitive features). However, as we know that the claim that p is true if and only if p, then a sentence apt to make the claim that p is true if and only if p. Providing a name, S, for that sentence gives us:

ET''. S is true if and only if p.

But that shows that any view of truth has to make sense of the possibility of using a truth predicate as a device of denominalisation. At the very least, truth is a device which will take us from the name of a sentence apt to make a claim, to the content of that sentence. In addition, we can go the other way. We can move from making a claim to the claim that any sentence which makes that claim is true. This latter feature of truth has come to be known as "semantic ascent". That is, a truth predicate allows us to talk about the world by talking about words. This is a highly unusual feature of the predicate, but very helpful in a theory of meaning. As McDowell puts it, "appending a truth-predicate to a designation of a sentence produces a sentence apt, once more, for saying something about the world: the very thing, in fact, that could have been said by using the original sentence" (McDowell, 1998b, p. 7). As Quine makes clear when he introduces the idea, a truth predicate that applies to names of sentences allows speakers to make generalisations about sentences, because they have a device for naming sentences and a device for moving from the name of a sentence to a use of that sentence. As Quine says:

> We may affirm the single sentence by just uttering it, unaided by quotation or by the truth predicate; but if we want to affirm some infinite lot of sentences that we can demarcate only by talking about the sentences, then the truth predicate has its use. We need it to restore the effect of objective reference when for the sake of some generalization we have resorted to semantic ascent"
>
> (Quine, 1986, p. 12).

Quine's idea is that, in normal circumstances, indicative sentences are apt for making claims about the world. They do so by being about one, or more, or even infinite collections of objects, and presenting a way for those objects to be[50]; hence

50 It might be thought that sentences cannot present ways for the world to be. After all, presenting is an action, and, it might be thought, it is agents who perform actions, not syntactically complete entities. However, if we take Quine's talk of 'affirming a sentence' seriously, we have to credit Quine with the

Quine's talk of "objective reference". In uttering those sentences we affirm that the world is as the sentence presents it. That is to say, we make an assertion about things in the world. However, there are assertions we need to be able to make where we are not able to make reference to the objects we wish to talk about. However, we can effect the same result by talking about a sentence or sentences and, by way of a truth predicate, saying of it/them that it/they is/are true. Quine's thought is that, in doing so, we, in fact, make the same claim as would be made by affirming the sentence or sentences of which we have predicated truth. What I am going to show is that it is this useful, but insubstantial feature, of truth talk that makes truth suitable to be the central feature of a theory of meaning.

Any adequate account of truth has to be committed to the equivalence thesis. In addition, that the equivalence thesis is correct shows that truth is both a device of denominalisation and of semantic ascent. So, assertions of a sentence, S, and assertions that S is true must stand and fall together. Because a theory of meaning is part of an account of what it is to use sentences, however rich your conception of truth, making the semantic ascent and rephrasing an account of content in terms of truth conditions can do no theoretical harm. Somebody who knows the content of a sentence thereby knows the truth conditions of that sentence, although she might not know that she knows that. The only question is: what is the significance of that knowledge?

Answering that question requires locating the theory of meaning in a wider account of what it is to understand a language. But, as, on any view of truth, understanding the content of a sentence is to understand the truth conditions of that utterance, by framing a theory of content as a theory of truth conditions, the theorist can answer the question by taking a view as to the nature of truth.

The deflationary theorist of truth is someone who maintains that truth would be redundant if it was not for the fact that there are some claims which we want to make that we do not have a way of making without using a truth predicate. However, for the deflationist, this function exhausts the nature truth. For her, there is no more to truth

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view that sentences present ways for the world to be. What we affirm are claims, and a claim asserts that the world is a particular way. So, in order to make a claim, there must be a presentation of a way for the world to be. It looks like Quine's view is that uttering an indicative sentence is to claim that the world is as the sentence presents it as being.

than its function as a device which allows us to generalise about what somebody believes or asserts without having to specify what it is that they believe or assert. There are instances when there is no other way of doing that than using a truth predicate. Like everybody else, the deflationist will claim that part of what competent speakers understand is what it is for their sentences to be true. However, for the deflationist, this claim does not in and of itself explain that understanding. If there is no more to truth than it being a device of semantic ascent, then a sentence being true cannot provide a reason for using it in any way whatsoever. On such views, what does provide a reason for using a sentence in a particular way is what it means, and the deflationary theorist will provide some further account, perhaps on a sentence by sentence basis, of what is understood to make sense of speaker competence.

Truth might be more substantial in one or both of two ways. The first is if truth is evaluative. If this is the case, then truth is organising language use, and what a competent speaker knows is how truth determines how a sentence should be used and responded to. This means that when she informs us that a fully competent speaker knows what it is for a sentence which specifies a content to be true, the evaluative theorist is stating something which in and of itself is meant to be what a competent speaker understands. Truth is precisely what speakers have to come to understand in order to understand a language.

The second way is that truth might reduce to some substantial property or relation, such as correspondence with a fact. If this is so, then there is something that all true sentences share, but, if the theorist is to make sense of the equivalence thesis, then predicating truth of a sentence only makes explicit that the sentence in question, and that any use of it, has that property also. On this view, if someone knows the meaning of a sentence which specifies the content of an assertion, she thereby knows the conditions in which the sentence used to make that assertion is true. She may not yet know what it is for a sentence to be true, for this is a further property she may not yet have knowledge of. On such a view, what speakers do is first come to understand what a sentence means and later come to see that if a sentence means that p, it is true if and only if p. However, in coming to learn the meaning of sentences they have to come to learn their truth conditions. So, specifying the truth conditions of sentences does specify what competent speakers need to have understood. However, making the semantic ascent appeals to

knowledge which the theorist has that a language user does not need. In other words, a truth conditional theory of meaning is not a description of the understanding of competent speakers, but it does describe something that they have understood, namely the truth conditions of each of the sentences which specify contents.

In addition to understanding the content of any sentence, a competent speaker understands what is (standardly) done by uses of that sentence. This understanding is captured by a theory of force. A theory of force accounts for the (standard) uses of different types of linguistic act. It does so by putting the theorist who possesses a theory of content in a position to say what the semantic role of each expression in a language is. Because of the centrality of the semantic role of sentences, it turns that trick by characterising types of linguistic act. Different types of linguistic act are the different uses of sentences. So, the theory of force looks to characterise the different ways sentences are (standardly) used. A theory of meaning can account for the semantic roles of sub-sentential expressions by having an account of the syntax of the language. So, a theory of force includes an account of the different syntactic types of sub-sentential expressions, for example, nouns, predicates, tense indicators and mood indicators. That account is provided by showing how different syntactic types of sub-sentential expression make a systematic difference to the way the sentences in which they occur are used. Finally, by assigning a syntactic category to each sub-sentential expression, the theory of force can be married up with a theory of content to give an account of the semantic role of each expression in a language[51].

Central to the creation of a theory of force is the characterisation of different types of linguistic act. To do that the theorist needs to capture what is common to an infinite range of possible uses of sentences. For ease of exposition I am going to focus on the assertoric case. If we were able to list all possible assertoric uses of sentences in a language, we could characterise assertion by writing down that list and then pointing out that the assertions, in that language, are all and only the members of that list. Of course, we cannot do that so we need to find a way of characterising all assertions. Assertions make claims about how things are, so what is wanted is a way of characterising what it is to make a claim. It is also the case, that when something makes a claim as to how things are, it is true when that is how things are. But, as I showed above, everybody,

51 Gareth Evans' use of the notation of categorial grammar provides a perspicuous way of seeing how this task might be achieved (Evans, 1982, pp. 9-10).

even the deflationary theorist, can use truth talk to capture that generality[52]. So, without any commitment to a substantial notion of truth, truth can be used in an account of assertion. I briefly suggested in the introduction how other linguistic acts might be related to truth. I am going to let that sketch (substituting "standardly" for "should" as appropriate. All I need for my current purposes is the thought that the (standard) difference different types of linguistic act make to the activity of using a language can be characterised according to the truth value of the sentence used to make the linguistic act.

To have a full account of the semantic role of an expression, a theory of meaning needs to say what is (standardly) done by a use of each expression. Now, the semantic role of a sub-sentential expression is given in terms of semantic roles of sentences in which it can occur. So, to know what is done by a sub-sentential expression, one needs to know what is done by sentences in which it can occur. As I showed above, to say what is (standardly) done by use of a sentence requires an account of force and content. I have shown how a truth predicate, by being a device of semantic ascent, can figure in an account of force.

This shows that language use is a world directed activity. Uses of sentences are about the world. How they relate to the world is in part a function of their content, and in part a function of their force. The simplest use is an assertoric one. An assertion is about the world by being a claim that that is how things are. But, then according to ES, it is true if and only if things are as they are claimed to be. So, a theory of content for a language provides an interpretation of the language. In doing so it provides an account of the actual truth conditions of the sentences of a language. To put it another way, it does so by showing how the truth value of a sentence systematically depends on the referents of the sub-sentential parts. Dummett puts the point like this:

> It does so by specifying, for each type of expression, what has to be associated with an expression of that type in order that, for every true sentence in which the expression occurs, we can exhibit the manner in which that sentence is determined as true in accordance with its composition. Let us say that, for any particular expression of any given type, that which must, according to the semantic theory, be so associated with it is

52 There may be, although I doubt it, another way to capture that generality. However, because any theory of truth needs to make sense of truth's use as a device of semantic ascent and denominalisation, any other theory of force will be equivalent to a truth conditional one.

its *semantic value*".

(Dummett, 1993, p. 234, italics original)[53]

It is important to get the explanatory order right here. There is as yet no reason to think that the requirement of providing an interpretation for a language forces the theorist of meaning to adopt a substantial notion of truth value. All she needs to account for is the fact that each sentence has a content. Correctly specifying that content is to correctly specify the truth conditions. Of course, if a deflationary account of truth becomes the central notion in a theory of meaning, it does not also explain how sentences are about the world. For the deflationary theorist, sentences are not about the world because they are true in such and such a condition. They are about the world, and so in such and such a condition they are true.

This gives us the following picture of a theory of meaning. A theory of meaning needs to provide an account of how speakers (standardly) use their language, which is how they (standardly) use their sub-sentential expressions and how they (standardly) use their sentences. In addition, a theory of meaning needs to provide an account of what has been done when speakers use a language. To do that is to give the semantic role of each expression. Meeting those two challenges involves building a theory with a bipartite form. One part provides an interpretation of the language – that is, by giving an account of the semantic values of expressions which have a semantic value. This is a theory of content. The second part accounts for what is and can (standardly) be done by different uses of sentences. This is a theory of force.

Because of the compositional nature of language nothing smaller than the use of

53 People with worries about intensional contexts might wish to modify Dummett's definition as follows:

> SV: that which is associated with an expression by a semantic theory such that, in *extensional contexts*, for every true sentence in which the expression occurs, we can exhibit the manner in which that sentence is determined as true in accordance with its composition.

Making that modification helps explain why "Diceopolis believes that Hesperus is the evening star" can have a different truth value from "Diceopolis believes that Phosphorus is the evening star" despite the fact that the words have all the same referents. The price for making the modification is high. It requires a loss of semantic innocence. Suddenly words change their meaning in intensional contexts, it is as if speakers would have to learn to use two languages rather than one. But, that is just not the case. So, adopting SV at least forces us to admit that there is more to meaning than can be captured via truth talk, but it is hard to then see what that might be given that sentences which involve intensional contexts are as much about the world as any other.

a sentence makes a linguistic act. So, in order to provide an interpretation of a language the semantic value of sentences must be taken as central. The semantic value of a sub-sentential expression is its contribution to the semantic values of sentences in which it can occur. As the (standard) difference that a linguistic act makes to the activity of speaking a language depends on the semantic value of the sentence used, different types of linguistic act are classified by the different ways the semantic values of the sentences used affect the activity. The aim is to provide a theory of force and an assignment of semantic values such that it accounts for the semantic role of each expression in the language. That theory of meaning then takes its place in a description of linguistic competence, an account of meaning, by the provision of a gloss that make sense of what it is to understand what is captured by such a bipartite theory. Because any proposed theory of content will be equivalent to a truth conditional theory of content and any proposed theory of force will be equivalent to a truth conditional theory of force, views of what it is to understand what is captured by a bipartite theory will take different views about the nature of truth.

§5 The Mental

I am going to start by showing that thinking is a rational activity. I will go into more detail about the structure of mental activity, use that to lay out the basic shape of a theory of thought, and finally move to different views of the mental. I will use that to show that there are three types of views about mentality and that different views of the mental require different conceptions of truth.

5.1 Thinking is a Rational Activity

It makes no sense to understand acts of thinking as anything other than a response to reasons. I argued for this in the introduction. In brief, thinking requires being able to set your own projects. Having projects involves differentially valuing situations, and that involves taking the world to be a particular way and desiring change where appropriate. I glossed that as having an evaluative world view. That evaluation is a matter of preferring certain states of affairs to others. Once one desires particular states

of affairs, there are things that one should do, things one should refrain from doing and things that are acceptable but not the right way to achieve a particular goal. So, having an evaluative worldview results in some, but not all, courses of action being warranted. Moreover, one is able, when things go right, to act in accordance with those warrants. A creature that is able to act in accordance with warrants is a creature that is responding to reasons. Thus, a creature with an evaluative worldview is one that is able to recognise and respond to reasons. So, because thinking requires having an evaluative worldview, being able to think is being responsive to reasons. As will emerge, the key question is: what is involved in being responsive to reasons?

5.2 Theories and Accounts of The Mental

An account of the mental aims to make sense of what it is to think about the world. It is an account of the understanding of a thinker. It needs to put the theorist in a position to say both what the subject can think and make sense of what it is to be a thinker. What a subject can think is a matter of what propositional attitudes it can have. So, an account of the mental needs a way of specifying what propositional attitudes a subject can have. Those propositional attitudes are mental states of the thinker. In addition, propositional attitudes are about ways for things to be. So, an account of the mental needs to have a view as to what it is for a state of the thinker to be a propositional attitude and what it is for those states to be about ways for things to be.

Just as with accounts of meaning, an account of the mental can be formulated by dividing the project into two sub-projects. The first sub-project is to provide a specification of what propositional attitudes a thinker can have by making sense of the role of each attitude in the activity. The reason for this will emerge, but, in brief, is that understanding is a matter of being able to do something. That doing is a matter of adopting and dropping propositional attitudes. Specifying what someone can do is to specify what propositional attitude she can have, and to specify what propositional attitude she can have is to specify what she can do. I am going to call such a specification a "theory of thought". It is the mental analogue of a theory of meaning. The second sub-project is to provide a gloss on such a theory. That gloss attempts to make sense of what it is to have each of those attitudes and what it is for those attitudes

to be about ways for the world to be. If the gloss is to be successful, it needs to make sense of thinkers as having an evaluative worldview, that is as being able to set their own projects and recognise and respond to the world accordingly, and, it needs to make sense of our ability to come to make sense of our own understanding. In other words, it needs to meet the practical capacity constraint and the explicit knowledge constraint.

For clarity, I want to be clear about how I am understanding thinking and how I am using my terminology. I take thinking to be a rational practical activity. It is the activity of recognising and responding to situations in the world in accordance with your projects. A creature that thinks is one that has propositional attitudes. Those attitudes are mental states. The activity proceeds by the adoption and dropping of propositional attitudes. That is, moving in and out of different mental states. A propositional attitude is an attitude with a content. That content is a thought. Those attitudes are about ways for the world to be. The content of those attitudes, the thoughts, determine what ways those attitudes are attitudes about. There are different types of attitudes, for example: belief, desire, hope and intention. These different types of attitudes are different attitudes a thinker takes concerning ways for the world to be. A theory of thought is a specification of the attitudes a thinker can adopt. However, it is more than just a theory that allows us to say what propositional attitudes a thinker can adopt. It is a description of what a thinker can do. It achieves this by making sense of content as that which makes a systematic difference to the activity of thinking and attitudes as systematic ways of responding to ways for the world to be. An account of the mental is completed by providing a gloss on that theory by making sense of what it is to be able to have those attitudes and making sense of how those attitudes are attitudes about ways for the world to be.

5.3 Compositionality of the Mental

Mental activity proceeds by adopting and dropping propositional attitudes. A propositional attitude, in my terminology, is an attitude with a thought as its content. The type of attitude is the mental analogue of force, and the thought is the mental analogue of the content. When somebody adopts a propositional attitude, she does something with a content. She might believe something, desire something, speculate

about something, and so on. As I showed in the introduction, having propositional attitudes is a matter of responding to reasons. These propositional attitudes are potentially transitory states of thinkers. However, as Gareth Evans pointed out (Evans, 1982, pp. 102–105) the mental displays a form of compositionality. This Evans labelled, "the generality constraint" (Evans, 1982, p. 100). Thoughts have to be structured because thinkers are keeping track of items in the world around them. Having a world view is a matter of being able to take the world to be a particular way. That requires keeping tabs on objects as they move around in space and as time goes by. Keeping tabs on an object requires, when things go well, being able to identify something and re-identify it. When it comes to objects, it is by their properties that you shall re-identify them. Re-identifying something by its properties requires being able to recognise and respond to properties. That involves being able to recognise the same property as it is encountered in different objects on different occasions and in the same object at different times and places. I will follow Christopher Peacocke and call such components of thoughts "concepts" (see, for example, Peacocke, 1999, p. 2). For example, I might believe that my amanuensis has left, and later believe that my amanuensis has returned. Those two beliefs are both propositional attitudes of the same type. They are different attitudes by having different thoughts as their contents. If, as theorists, we are to make sense of these beliefs as both being about the same person, my amanuensis, we need to realise that the two different thoughts both contain the concept of my amanuensis. I might then believe that I should have left already. This requires that the concept of leaving and the concept of returning can be utilised in different propositional attitudes.

5.4 Understanding As an Ability: Mental Role and Mental Value

An account of the mental is aimed at telling us what it is for a thinker to be able to think and what a thinker does when it thinks. What I am going to show is that, because there is no more to thinking that what a thinker is able to do, this involves building a theory of thought and providing a gloss on it. The theory theory of thought must complete two projects. The first project is to make sense of the way the activity of thinking proceeds. To this end a theory of thought must capture, what I am going to call, the mental role of each thought which a thinker can have as the content of a

propositional attitude. It achieves this by capturing the mental role of each concept a thinker possesses. The second project is to say of any possible thought which way for the world to be propositional attitudes with that thought as content is about. Because of the compositional nature of thoughts this is achieved by assigning, what I am going to call, mental values to each concept a thinker possesses. The gloss on that theory needs to take a view on whether or not those two projects are only nominally separate. On some views of the mental, being minded is a matter of being disposed to behave in a way which is describable according to a conception of rationality, and it is a further question as to why the states so described are about anything at all. These class of accounts treat mental role as determining mental value, but that connection requires some explanation. Such views, as Hornsby points out, face the question: "why truth?" (1989, p. 550). On other views of the mental, no description of thinking, concept possession or thoughts is possible other than in terms of the way the world strikes the thinker. On these accounts, the mental value of a concept determines its mental role. Adherence to this class requires treating truth as organising thinking.

Thinking is a rational practical activity, and being able to think is being able to do something. An account of the mental needs to provide a description of what a thinker can do. What a thinker can do is determined by the concepts she possesses, but what concepts she possesses is a matter of what conceptual capacities she has. In other words, accounting for what a thinker can do requires describing conceptual capacities. However, a conceptual capacity is the capacity to have a range of thoughts which involve the concept in question. Those thoughts are the contents of possible propositional attitudes. Propositional attitudes are typed by their role in the activity of thinking. So, conceptual capacities need to be typed by the difference they make to the roles of propositional attitudes in which they can occur. That being so Peacocke is right in his "Principle of Dependence":

> **Principle of Dependence** There can be nothing more to the nature of a concept than is determined by a correct account of the capacity of a thinker who has mastered the concept to have propositional attitudes to contents containing that concept (a correct account of "grasping the concept").
>
> (Peacocke, 1999, p. 5)[54]

54 I do have a little quibble with Peacocke's phrasing. I think that we are better off thinking of

This is, as Peacocke himself points out, "the concept-theoretic analogue of one of Dummett's principles about language (Dummett 1975). As a theory of meaning should be a theory of understanding, so a theory of concepts should be a theory of concept possession" (1999, p. 5). The simple thought is that accounting for concepts is done by accounting for concept possession. That in turn is done by showing how possessing a concept makes a systematic difference to the mental life of the possessor. One aim, then, of a theory of thought is for it to be a description of those responses.

Thinkers can only adopt a propositional attitude when they possess the concepts which make up the content of that attitude. A thinker possesses a concept when she has the relevant conceptual capacities. She adopts a propositional attitude by exercising the relevant conceptual capacities. The exercising of concepts are the incomplete actions in the activity of thinking. Adopting and dropping propositional attitudes are the complete actions in the activity of thinking. For the adopting of a propositional attitude to be an action it needs the potential to have grounds and to have consequences. In summary, propositional attitudes can have grounds and will have consequences[55]. The grounds and consequences of a particular propositional attitude depend partly on the type of attitude it is and partly on the content of the attitude. That is, partly on whether the attitude is the attitude of belief, of desire et cetera and partly on the thought which is the content of the attitude. This gives each thought a role within the mental life of a thinker. It is the mental analogue of semantic role. I will label it "mental role". Two thoughts have the same role when they have the same place in the activity of thinking. That is, two thoughts have the same role when they do not make any difference to the grounds and consequences of propositional attitudes of which they are the content. A criterion of

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propositional attitudes as attitudes towards ways the world to be with thoughts as their content. I would rephrase Peacocke's principal to reflect this. To wit: There can be nothing more to the nature of a concept than is determined by a correct account of the capacity of a thinker who has mastered the concept to have propositional attitudes *with* contents containing that concept

55 It also marks a crucial disanalogy with language use. Although, on any account of language use, most uses of language are rational actions, the description of linguistic activity does not have to proceed by giving grounds and consequences for using sentences in different types of speech act. Instead, it might be presented as the standard conditions for introducing a speech act and the standard upshot of so doing. When it comes to the mental, all mental actions are rational actions. So, any description of the activity of thinking does so by giving the grounds and consequences of different types of propositional attitude.

identity on mental role is as follows:

MRT: Two thoughts have the same mental role if and only if they are everywhere interchangeable without affecting the rest of the activity.

As thinking is a compositional activity, concepts will also have a mental role. Of course, that role is their effect on the rest of the activity. It is their effect on which propositional attitudes are adopted or dropped. Two concepts have the same role when they are everywhere interchangeable without affecting which propositional attitudes are admissible at any given time[56]. As the admissibility of a propositional attitude is determined in part by the thought which is its content, the mental role of concepts is identified as follows.

MRC: two concepts have the same mental role if and only if they are everywhere interchangeable without affecting the mental roles of thoughts in which they can occur.

What a theory of thought needs to do is specify the mental role of each mental items. Each possible propositional attitude has a unique role, and so, given the vast array of things a thinker can think, it is at least a practical impossibility to specify the role of each one individually. Similarly, each concept can occur in an enormous range of possible propositional attitudes, and so it is also a practical impossibility to specify its contribution to the role of each member of a list of possible propositional attitudes. However, if, as I am assuming is correct, there is something right about our everyday psychological attributions, then there are a limited range of types of propositional attitude, and each type can be characterised by that type's characteristic role in the activity of thinking. The characteristic role of each type of propositional attitude is characterised in accordance with the way adopting each type of attitude affects what other attitudes, of both the same and different type, are held. A type of attitude is a grouping together of a potentially infinite range of possible propositional attitudes. Those attitudes are grouped together because they all display a characteristic pattern of interaction with other attitudes. That pattern of interaction is a matter of tendencies to

56 It does seem a bit odd to think that there could be two different concepts with the same role. There is nothing to individuate concepts apart from their role in propositional attitudes. However, the definition does put identity conditions on the role of a concept, and this is enough for my purposes. I am trying to describe the general shape a theory of thought has to take.

adopt and drop propositional attitudes in response to the adoption of a new attitude of that type as well as tendencies for pairs of attitudes to co-occur or not co-occur. It is that pattern of interaction which a theory of thought tries to describe. Those tendencies are described in terms of relations between thoughts. It is done by appeal to the notion of an arbitrary thought as content, and by saying things like, 'adopting the belief that p tends to result in dropping the belief that p, should the thinker have held the latter belief', or, 'the desire that q tends not to co-occur with the belief that q'. So, what is wanted is a conception of thoughts that make sense of them as the sorts of things that make a systematic difference to the activity of thinking by being the contents of possible propositional attitudes. In addition, we want a conception of concepts as the sort of things that make a systematic difference to the role of thoughts in which they can occur in the activity of thinking.

The former conception, the conception of thoughts as the sort of things that make a difference to the activity of thinking, is captured by characterising different types of propositional attitudes in terms of the ways that the contents of those attitudes affect the rest of the activity. For example, a partial characterisation of belief might be as follows:

> Belief is the attitude such that believing that p is incompatible with believing that not p.
>
> A full characterisation would add further clauses after "such that".

Those characterisations of attitude types aim to characterise each type by showing how the contents of those attitudes make a difference to the activity of thinking. This brings with it the notion of a thought as that which makes a systematic difference to how propositional attitudes interact with each other. It also means that giving a full characterisation of the different types of attitudes would give a full characterisation of what it is to be a thought. With this conception of thoughts in hand, giving an account of concepts in terms of the capacities of thinkers is a matter of giving an account of what a thinker has to be able to do in order to have thoughts involving that concept. To make the account harmonious, that "being able to do" is understood in terms of the transitions into and out of and between propositional attitudes a thinker who possesses that concept is going to make.

This is the familiar bipartite theory, but this time of the mental. On the one hand

we have a description of the types of propositional attitudes that a thinker can have in terms of the ways that the contents of those attitudes affects the activity of thinking. On the other hand, we have an account of the contents of those attitudes in terms of the concepts that makes up those attitudes. However, it is important to note that conceptual content is understood and characterised in terms of what a thinker has to be able to do in order to possess that content. What has been described by such a theory is what Brian Loar has labelled "horizontal connections" (1982). So far, if someone were to complete the, admittedly daunting, task of building such a theory, what she would have described is the movement into, out of and between propositional attitudes. Ascriptions of propositional attitudes would do no more than pick out mental states by characterising their dispositional properties. Thoughts are being ascribed as the contents of those attitudes as a way of indexing and describing a dispositional setup. However, as Loar points out, "a propositional attitude description describes a person's state in two dimensions: it places the state within a certain system… and it ascribes truth conditions" (1981, p. 57). In other words, the theorist also needs an account of the intentionality of propositional attitudes.

However, an ascription of content to a propositional attitude is an ascription of something with truth conditions because of the following platitude:

BPLT: The belief that p is true if and only if p.

The belief that p is the name of a belief, the belief whose content is given by a sentence which can be used to assert that p. The content of that belief is a thought. In fact, the thought that p. It follows that following is also a platitude:

TPLT: The thought that p is true if and only if p.

But, the thought that p can be the content of any type of propositional attitude. So, any propositional attitude has a content which has truth conditions. In addition, showing how possessing a concept makes a systematic difference to the contents of propositional attitudes in which that concept can occur is showing how that concept contributes to the truth conditions of thoughts in which it can occur. This allows for a notion of mental value as analogous to semantic value. It will be defined as follows:

MV: That which is associated with a concept by a theory of thought such that for every true thought in which the component occurs, we can exhibit the manner in which that thought is determined as

true in accordance with its composition.

Now, it may be that the theorist of the mental holds a deflationary theory of truth. If that is the case, then she will think there is no more to truth as applied to thoughts than its function as a device of mental ascent. That is, for it to allow us to talk about the world whilst talking about thoughts. If so, she will think that truth as applied to the mental is fully captured by something like TPLT. If so, she will not think that the possibility of a thought's being true explains the intentionality of propositional attitudes. She will either think that no explanation is required or will provide some other account of intentionality.

If the theorist of thought does hold a deflationary view of truth, her theory of mental content will be a theory of the truth conditions of thoughts. It is just that such a theory is not explanatory. If the theorist holds a more substantial view of truth she will still have provided a theory of truth conditions by providing a theory of content. This is because whatever her theory of truth she has to be able to make sense of TPLT. The reasoning runs parallel to the linguistic case. TPLT is a condition of adequacy on any view of truth. If it were not, there would be nothing wrong with you believing that p is true, believing that q followed from p's being true and not accepting that q is true because you would not have been shown a route from the truth of the premises to the truth of the conclusion. So, whatever one's view of truth, a theory of content is a theory of truth conditions.

However, if the theorist is not a deflationist, she will think that there is more to truth than its function as a device of mental ascent. If the theorist treats truth as substantial, but not evaluative, she will understand assignments of truth conditions as embodying information about a curious, but substantial property of thoughts. However, like the deflationary theorist, she will not think of truth conditions as conveying information about what a thinker can do. Instead, she will describe what the thinker can to, and then point out that the contents of the thinker's attitudes have this interesting, substantial property. If the theorist treats truth as an evaluative property, then truth organises the activity of thinking. In this case, describing what a thinker can do, describing its understanding, is done by showing how the concepts it possesses make a systematic difference to the truth values of the content of its propositional attitudes, and understanding propositional attitudes requires showing how the truth values of the

contents make a systematic difference to the thinker's behaviour (where 'behaviour' includes both what the thinker does and which attitudes it adopts and drops).

Here is a good place to point out that different views of the mental will be more or less explicit about a theory of thought being a theory of mental role. Any view which treats the truth value of a thought as not being explanatory of mental role will have to be fully explicit that it is a theory of mental role. Its account of conceptual content will be an account of the kinds of transitions a thinker who possesses a set of concepts will be disposed to make. On a view which treats truth value as explanatory of mental role, things will not be so explicit. Such a theory might proceed by assigning mental values to concepts. However, a mental value is no more than the contribution made by that concept to the truth values of thoughts in which it can occur. On such views, different attitude types are described in terms of different responses to the truth of the thoughts which can be their contents. On this sort of view, mental content is still being characterised in terms of what a thinker can do, although, because the theory makes sense of what a thinker can do in thick rational terms, this does not have to appear on the surface of the theory of thought. Nevertheless, on these sorts of views, a theory of thought is still a theory of what a thinker does.

What about the 'theory of force'? How does truth figure in an account of the nature of propositional attitudes? I am assuming that there is something right about our everyday ascription propositional attitudes. This is to say that, whatever one's view of the mental, there is some explanatory or predictive value in ascribing mental states of the form 'T ϕ's that p' to a thinker (where 'T' is the name of a thinker and 'ϕ' is a stand-in for a propositional attitude). Those everyday psychological ascriptions rely on the thought that a thinker's behaviour can be rationalised. What we do, very roughly, is make sense of thinkers as wanting something to be the case whilst believing other things to be the case. In other words, we think of thinkers as being rational and understand rationality in terms of truth. At this stage, it is possible that that description need be no more than a model which anything that is to count as a thinker needs to more or less match. In other words, there is no need, as yet, to think that thinking can only be understood in terms of the way truth organises thought. The alternative, deflationary, view is that thinking is to be understood as a functional set-up that more or less exemplifies such a rational model. But, in either case the theorist's account of

propositional attitudes must be (at least nearly) equivalent to one given in terms of truth. In other words, a theory of force for the mental, needs to make sense of beliefs as the attitude of holding true, desire as the attitude of wanting true, intentions as the attitude of planning to make true and so on. As will be shown in what follows, different views of the mental take a different approach to how much more and what type of explanation is required to make sense of those claims.

A bipartite truth conditional theory of thought, then, makes sense of the activity of thinking by being a theory of what a creature has to be able to do in order to be a thinker. It is not yet an account of thinking because it does not yet tell us what is done when a creature thinks. This is the job of a gloss on the bipartite theory. This gloss comes out as a dispute over the nature of truth. Different views of the mental are then a dispute over what it is to be a rational creature, and that is a dispute over what it is to recognise and respond to reasons. The first division in this dispute is whether or not natural science is adequate to account for what it is to be a rational creature. If a natural science is adequate, we can make sense of rationality in terms of dispositions to respond in characteristic ways to features of the world. There is no more, on these types of views, to what is done than is captured by a description of the horizontal connections between mental states. On such views, thoughts make a difference to the activity of thinking in the way that temperatures make a difference to the activities of substances. To ascribe, for example, the belief that running is healthy to a person is to encode information about her mental state. If we ask why did she go running, and cite that belief as operative, such views understand that claim on analogy with saying that the kettle is producing steam because the water is above 100° C. The challenge for such views is showing why creatures which display such behaviours can be said to be thinking about the world. Meeting the challenge is a matter of showing why there are truth conditions at all. I label such views:

(d) Functional organisation views

On the other side of the division, it is thought that rationality is a sui generis norm. If this is the case, then no natural science is adequate to make sense of what it is to be a thinker. Instead, we have to take the view that thinkers are creatures who have some conception of what follows from what. We account for their behaviour, including their mental life, in terms of their being able to make both practical and theoretical

inferences. Such views think that an account of mindedness must start from the thought that a creature thinks of a given situation that such and such is the case/should be the case. On this side of the division, ascribing a content to propositional attitude does more than encode information about the attitude's horizontal connections. It treats a thinker's understanding/misunderstanding of the situation as in itself operative in bringing about their actions. The challenge for these views is making sense of how such recognition can be possible given that thinkers are, to put it figuratively, made out of earth and water. This division further subdivides over the question of whether or not being able to respond to reasons requires having your mental life governed by rules of rationality. The denial of that claim allows one to think that rational creatures are merely ones that are able to behave rationally. I label such views:

(e) Concept fact views.

Maintaining the claim requires thinking that thinkers behave rationally because they have their mental life governed by prescriptive rules. I label such views:

(f) Mental practice views.

I now want to put a little bit more flesh on those bones by thinking about the kinds of warrants that the different views are committed to. The first two ways, (d) functional organisation views and (e) concept fact views, treat a theory of thought as a description of the way an agent responds to the world. They disagree about the tools required for that description. (d) – functional organisation views – commit themselves to being a natural scientific description of the agents mentality. Of course, that is not simply a description of what that agent does. After all, they will have to have some way of making sense of the creature being in error. So, they will look for a model that best makes sense of the creature's behaviour. That does not need to be an account of that creature's dispositions. For example, in "Truth rules, hoverflies, and the Kripke-Wittgenstein paradox", Millikan attempts to explain the male hoverfly's disposition to make sudden darting movements in response to a characteristic pattern of stimulation on its retina in terms of the fly's desire to reproduce and its belief that there is a female hoverfly in the vicinity (Millikan, 1990, pp. 216–217). Millikan's view is an example of a view that is able to make sense of the creature as not being very good at thinking, without appeal to a prior grasp of the structure of rationality. It is an attempt to describe the way a creature responds to the world by making sense of the way its projects link up

with its behaviour. On such views, there are no procedural warrants which govern correct thinking. There is no space for getting things right according to according to a procedure[57].

(e) Concept fact views differ from functional views by maintaining that no description of an agent's mentality is possible without describing it according to a conception of rationality. That is, it requires describing it according to some notion of what in fact follows from what. The thought is that any description of the mind requires a description according to a "constitutive ideal of rationality" (Davidson, 2001a, p. 223)[58.] Such a view starts from a good, but not complete, understanding of how rationality itself works. It uses that understanding to make sense of the mentality of a creature. Making sense of other creatures has the added bonus of helping expand your understanding of rationality itself. Importantly, on this second way there is no commitment to the structure of rationality providing procedural rules for thinking. Instead, an agent is behaving rationally in as much as they can be made sense of. But, the idea of rationality is a heuristic tool. It does not govern the mental life of an agent. Again, there are no procedural rational warrants. Such views bifurcate according to whether or not a creature, operating at the ground floor, is credited with insight into the a priori structure of rationality. Frege, when he locates thoughts in the third realm, is someone who requires thinking to involve just such an insight (Frege, 1956, p. 302). Christopher Peacocke, unhappy with Frege's inability to account for our insight into the third realm, denies that such insight is necessary (Peacocke, 1999, pp. 99–124)[59].

57 Other defenders of functional views include, Brian Loar, who defends a functional view of the mental in his book, "Mind and Meaning" (Loar, 1981); Gilbert Harman has a simlliar view (Harman, 1982); Paul Horwich holds a functional view of the mental, his view difference from Loar's being a version of a language of thought hypothesis (Horwich, 2005, pp. 175-198). Whyte's "Success Semantics" (Whyte, 1990) is another functional view of the mental; success semantics claims F.P. Ramsey as its progeniture, in particular his, "Facts and Propositions" (Ramsey, 1927). However, Peter Sullivan has convincingly argued that Ramsey held no such view (Sullivan, 2013, p. 25).

58 Although the phrase is Davidson's, I picked it up from John McDowell's "Functionalism and Anomalous Monism" (1998a, p.334).

59 I think that Russell's various views of the nature of propositions (Russell, 1904, 1992 and 1921) are concept fact views. Kathrin Glüer, Anandi Hattiangadi and Åsa Wikforss have also defended such a view (Glüer and Wikforss, 2009), (Glüer and Wikforss, 2010), (Hattiangadi, 2007). These views take thinking to involve understanding a thought. I think that Davidson's anomalous monism is the progenitor of the second type of concept view (Davidson, 2001a, 214-225). McDowell also adopts

(f) Mental practice views do ascribe prescriptive force to the ideal of rationality. They treat thinking as a matter of having one's mental life governed by the rules of rationality. On these views, given that a creature has desires, and given that there are things to do and things to avoid, there will be both hypothetical and categorical warrants. But, thinking requires following prescriptive rules of rationality. What those rules prescribe, prohibit and permit will vary according to the situation, but, the idea is, nothing can be a thinker unless it is able to acknowledge the force of these rules. Understanding thinking is then understood in terms of the procedural warrants which govern correct thought. On the final type of view, thinking is taking part in a rational practice. Robert Brandon has defended such a view (Brandom, 1998). I am going to tentatively suggest that this is the correct way of thinking about thinking. However, if that is right, it turns out it is not possible to think without the ability to use a language[60].

§6 Truth

At the very beginning of this chapter, I noted that the two key questions concerning truth are:

Q1. What is it to have a truth value?

Q2. What are the primary bearers of truth?

I also claimed that the right way to go about answering those questions was through thinking about meaning and thought. I am now in a position to show how one might go about making good on that claim.

6.1 Recap

An account of meaning and an account of the mental are both theories of understanding. That is, they are both descriptions of rational, practical capacities. In the linguistic case, it is a description of the capacity to use and understand a language. In

this type of view (see his "Functionalism and Anomalous Monism", in McDowell, 1998a, pp. 325-340).

60 Kripke's "Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language" (Kripke, 1984) especially in conjunction with his deflationary view of truth (Kripke, 1975) seems to have a mental practice view. Boghossian has also defended a mental practice view (Boghossian, 2003).

the mental case, it is a description of the capacity to recognise and respond to reasons. In the linguistic case that description is given by providing a bipartite theory and a gloss. The bipartite theory gives the (standard) content of any possible linguistic action as one part, whilst a description of the different types of linguistic action and the way different parts of speech make a different to which type of linguistic action is (standardly) performed by different uses of language makes up the other part. Whatever one's view of truth, this bipartite theory is, at the very least, equivalent to a truth conditional one. In addition, it captures what is understood by competent speakers of a language, namely the (standard) significance of any use of a sentence. So, it is a theory of that which is understood by competent speakers, and what is understood are truth conditions and how to present them in different ways. The gloss required to turn such a theory into an account of meaning seeks to make sense of what it is to understand such things. This comes out as the debate over the nature and home of truth.

The mental case also requires a bipartite theory and the gloss. In this case, the theory captures the role of each mental state a thinker can have. It does so by making sense of what states a thinker can be in in terms of capacities it has to move into, out of and between mental states. This is one part. It also makes sense of the kinds of mental states a thinker can be in by capturing the systematic difference different types of mental state make to the life of a thinker. Again, that bipartite theory will, at least, be equivalent to a truth conditional one and provides a description of a thinker's understanding of the world. The gloss on that theory is then an account of what it is to be a thinker at all and, in particular, must make sense of what it is for those states to be recognitions and responses to ways for things to be. This also comes out as a debate over the nature and home of truth.

6.2 Prescriptions and Descriptions

I suggested that all views of language could be placed into one of three broad categories, and the same is true of views of thought. These are:

(a) Use views

(b) Meaning fact views

(c) Linguistic practice views

(d) Functional organisation views

(e) Concept fact views

(f) Mental practice views

(a) – (c) are views of language, and (d) – (f) are views of thought. In both the linguistic and the mental case, a bipartite truth conditional theory provides a model of the relevant activity – using language or thinking. The view of language which is adopted affects how one thinks about that activity. The same goes for the mental case. How the activity is thought about is reflected in how one understands the significance of the relevant bipartite truth conditional theory. What we as theorists need to get a grip on is why the activity proceeds in the way it does. Answering that question requires answering the further question of how the activity relates to the world. The answer to the first question, why the activity proceeds in the way does, is a matter of deciding on whether or not there are prescriptive rules which govern the activity. If there are not, the activity is described by finding law like generalisations which make sense of the way the activity proceeds. In other words, the activity is captured with descriptive rules.

What are descriptive and prescriptive rules? Here are some definitions:

Prescriptive: a rule is prescriptive if and only if it prohibits or prescribes a course of action.

Descriptive: a rule is descriptive if and only if it describes the course of action that something will/tends to take.

Prescriptive rules provide oughts. That is, they provide rules for the regulation of behaviour. However, there is no obvious reason why any actual behaviour will ever or could ever be in accordance with the rule[61]. A good example of a prescriptive rule would be "thou shalt not murder". The sixth commandment (or fifth depending on your exegesis) prohibits murder. Cain breaks this commandment when he kills his brother. He has done something that he should not do.

61 I appreciate that many people think that oughts imply cans. I have never understood the motivation for this view. But, if the principle seems plausible, then the weaker claim that there is no obvious reason why actual behaviour will be in accordance with a particular prescriptive rule still holds.

Descriptive rules describe regularities, but they do not have anything to say about what ought to happen. The interest in descriptive rules accrues because they allow us to talk about extremely large, and even infinite, classes of situations. Most people are going to think that they are empirical generalisations from observations. Although, given a fancy enough metaphysics, it is possible to think that they hold necessarily (and, given a really fancy metaphysics, you might think that they could be known a priori – presumably Leibniz is somebody who thinks that). But, even if it is true that they hold necessarily and could be known a priori, then the best that can be said is that the behaviour of entities described by a descriptive rule is behaviour that had to occur. However, the behaviour of entities governed by descriptive rules which hold necessarily is not the behaviour of entities doing as they ought.

An example of a descriptive rule, to borrow from Paul Horwich is the ideal gas law (Horwich, 2005, p. 125) and (2010, p. 119). It states that pressure multiplied by the volume of gas is directly proportional to the quantity and the temperature of the gas. The example is helpful because it shows that we have the notion of an empirical, descriptive law that does not have any actual instances. No actual gas is an ideal gas. Instead an ideal gas is a theoretical posit. The description of the behaviour of an ideal gas, expressed in the ideal gas law, describes fairly well the behaviour of actual gases, and thus can be thought to capture what is empirically significant about the relation between the volume and temperature of actual gasses. For example, if there is a load of steam in a container of a given size, the gas law predicts that as the temperature increases there will be a more or less directly proportional increase in the pressure exerted on the container. Importantly, if, contrary to physics, the pressure did not increase at all, the gas has not failed to do what it ought. It has merely confounded our empirical hypothesis expressed in the ideal gas law.

The aim of the theorist of meaning or the aim of the theorist of thought is to provide a description of the relevant activity. These are non-finite activities. The theorist needs a way of describing an infinite range of possible uses. She does that by formulating rules such that a grasp of those rules is sufficient to understand how a particular group of speakers/a particular thinker tends to go on. In the (a) use, (b) meaning fact, (d) functional organisation and (e) conceptual fact cases the rules make sense of what happens by stating something which, if understood, would put one in a

position to take part in the relevant activity and to have explicit knowledge of what is going on. They are descriptive rules. Those rules can be formulated using a truth predicate. But, it should now be apparent that those rules are descriptive generalisations. They do not provide any reason to use sentences or thoughts one way rather than another. So, the truth predicate used to formulate those rules is not an evaluative predicate. On the other hand, (c) linguistic practice and (f) mental practice views take it that competent language users are able to follow prescriptive rules for use. Grasping those very rules is sufficient to give one an understanding of both what is done when language is used and how that affects the way the activity proceeds. These rules govern how the relevant activity ought to proceed. As those rules are formulated using a truth predicate and are substantial prescriptive rules, the truth predicate will be an evaluative predicate.

6.3 Types of Truth

When I introduced the role of truth in theories of meaning and theories of thought, I pointed out that a theory of content would, because of truth's function as a device of semantic ascent, thereby be a theory of truth. I also pointed out that a theory of force would then be an account of how the truth values of sentences/thoughts affect the use of any item in the activity. Now, both activities are intentional activities, in the sense that they are world directed. The philosophical interest in language use and thinking accrues because we want an understanding of intentionality. That is, we want to know what it is for those activities to be world directed. However, because truth is a device of ascent, to say that something is true is to say that this is how things are. Truth is predicated of linguistic and mental items, and so those items are true when they capture how things are. So it is by explaining why it is that truth can serve as a device of semantic and mental ascent that we are able to make sense of the intentionality. In making sense of what it is to say that different truth bearers are true, we make sense of the intentionality of thought and language.

There are two dimensions to the dispute over the nature of truth. One dimension is whether or not truth is an evaluative or descriptive predicate. The second is whether or not content accounts for truth or truth accounts for content. Before introducing the

different views of truth, I want to note that neither dimension is the deflationary/substantial dimension. I also want to note how I understand that distinction. Deflationism about truth is a broad church (although in my view, it is more like the inferno and covers a variety of sins). I hold that the hallmark of a deflationary view is a commitment to the thought that truth is simply a device of semantic ascent and denominalisation. If that is correct, then we only need a notion of truth in as much as there are claims we cannot make without resorting to semantic ascent. That thought can be developed in a variety of different ways. There is no agreed terminology when it comes to different deflationary views. So, my definitions should be read as stipulative.

The views of truth that I will be considering are as follows:

T1. Minimalism
T2. Designation
T3. Redundancy
T4. Interpretive
T5. Pragmatic phenomenalism.
T6. Evaluative

T1. Minimalism is a view that has been developed and defended by Paul Horwich (1998a, 1998b, 2005, 2010). This is the view that there is no problem with truth or intentionality. At heart it is a view about meaning. It maintains that there is no more to the meaning of any expression than propensities to use that expression in a particular way, and that there is no more to conceptual content then a propensity to think in a particular way. This includes our propensity to use truth as a device of semantic and mental ascent. It also includes our propensity to use semantic vocabulary to say things like, '"snow" refers to snow', and, '"is white" is true of snow', and things like, 'w means $F \rightarrow (x)$(w is true of x $\leftrightarrow$ fx)'. As a result, it explains our propensity to say, "snow is white" in terms of our propensity to accept, '"snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white'. It then follows that if we accept "snow is white" it is because we think that snow is white. If it all works, then, then although we cannot talk about intentionality without using truth talk, there is nothing to explain. Such a view treats a theory of meaning as a description of what language users do. The truth predicate is not an

evaluative predicate. It is no more than a device of semantic ascent, and there is no problem with intentionality. Minimalism denies that there is anything to significant to grasp. For the minimalist, intentionality is simply a matter of what we do.

T2. Designation views are views which traditionally have been labelled "correspondence theories". The reason is that they hold that truth is a matter of correspondence between truth-bearer and truth-maker. However, "correspondence" is a broad term. As long as there is a mapping between truth-bearers and truth-makers, then truth-bearers can be said to correspond to truth-makers. The key feature of a traditional correspondence view is that the intentionality of a sentence/thought is a matter of it designating some item in the world. This is perhaps clearest in Russell when he writes:

> This constitutes the definition of truth and falsehood that we were in search of. Judging or believing is a certain complex unity of which a mind is a constituent; if the remaining constituents, taken in the order which they have in the belief, form a complex unity, then the belief is true; if not, it is false.
>
> Thus although truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, yet they are in a sense extrinsic properties, for the conditions of the truth of a belief is something not involving beliefs, or (in general) any mind at all, but only the objects of the belief. A mind, which believes, believes truly when there is a corresponding complex not involving the mind, but only it objects.
>
> (2001, pp. 74–75)

The thought here is that in belief, terms, which, for Russell, are things in the world, are united together into a complex whole by an act of judgement. That complex whole is true when it corresponds to some complex whole in the world. The question is though, which, if any, complex whole? The answer is the one consisting of the terms united by the act of judgement. Thus, each term in the act of judgement designates a thing in the world and the complex whole, if it designates anything at all, designates the corresponding complex whole made out of those terms. Similarly, JL Austin provides a neat little theory of truth with the claim that given two sets of conventions:

> Descriptive conventions correlating the words (= sentences) with the types of situation, thing, event, etc., to be found in the world.
> Demonstrative conventions correlating the words (= statements) with the historic situations, etc., to be found in the world.

> A statement is said to be true when the historic state of affairs to which it is correlated by the demonstrative conventions (the one to which it "refers") is of a type with which the sentence used in making it is correlated by the descriptive conventions.
>
> (1950, p. 116)

Again, like Russell, Austin maintains that truth is an extrinsic property of truth bearers, which, for Austin, are statements. Truth is reduced to a relation to a historic state of affairs in which some, but not all, truth bearers participate. But, that relation is one of designation.

Just so long as "correspondence" is not appealed to as a kind of gentle reminder that the truth value of a sentence/thought depends as much on how things are in the world is on the content of the truth bearer, then the theorist is committed to truth reducing to a relation between truth bearer and truth maker. This leaves both truth bearers and truth makers as objects, and leaves the theorist requiring some account of why and when those objects stand in the correspondence relation to each other. That is either a matter of the constituent parts designating things in the world, à la Russell, or the whole designating some state of affairs, à la Austin.

Designation views have to account for the fact that not everything with a content is truth apt. They need some account of a complete content, such that all and only things with a complete content are truth apt. Because, on these views, truth is understood as the relation between a complete item and an entity in the world, the picture that emerges is that things with the sort of content characteristic of a complete item are such that they designate a particular truth-maker. As a result, such views deny that truth can be used to account for content. Instead, they try to give some account of content which can make sense of designation, and then define truth as a relation between contentful items and things in the world. The hallmark of such views is that intentionality is understood in terms of designation. This means that the view Frege propounds in, "On sense and reference" is a designation view. Frege understands a sentence to designate an object, either the true or the false, in virtue of it expressing a thought which has one of those two objects as its referent (Frege, 1948, p. 216). Of course, Frege does not think of himself as a correspondence theorist, but, as I read him, this is because he misleadingly restricts the term "correspondence theory" to capture views which treat truth as a relation between truth-makers and facts. Frege's complaint is that such views are going

to fall foul of a slingshot like argument, and so embraces the slingshot's conclusion that there are only two referents for sentences (Frege, 1948, p. 217)[62][63].

T3. There are a large number of redundancy theories. They all differ from minimalism in accepting that there is a substantial question about intentionality. They acknowledge that truth is a device of ascent, but look for an explanation of why a given truth-bearer possesses the truth value that it does. This has to be a property that can be recognised, and thus accounted for, without reference to truth. They have a substantial notion of intentionality, but, unlike the designation theorist, deny that intentionality is a matter of designation. According to a redundancy view, intentionality is an intrinsic property of content. But, the redundancy theorist denies that intentionality is a sui generis property of mental states and utterances. Or, perhaps more accurately, the mistake is to think that a worldview in something that can only be understood from a special rational perspective. Instead, intentionality can be explained in natural scientific terms, and so aims for an account of content that can be given in causal-cum-functional terms. The right way to go about this, and quite what counts as natural scientific makes sense of some of the differences between redundancy views. However, all redundancy views, require some natural scientifically respectable account of proper functioning. The hope is that we can make sense of aboutness in terms of functional characteristics of mental states or sentences. Again, truth has its use as a way of talking about content. It is neither evaluative nor more than a device of semantic/mental ascent.

T4. Interpretive views maintain that truth, although partly definable by the enumeration of truth conditions, is an irreducible primitive. In other words, they maintain that, even for a finite, artificial language, L, specifying the truth conditions of every sentence would do no more than specify the extension of the one place predicate, "true in L". It would not tell us everything about what all the sentences which were true in L had in common; namely that they were the true sentences of L (See also, Davidson, 2001, p. 20). Truth appears as the property that is used to make sense of intentionality. The idea is that truth cannot be understood in terms of the relation of designation.

62 For a good discussion of the relevant passages in Frege see Neale, 2001, pp. 80-82. Neale's 2001 also provides an excellent discussion of the slingshot.

63 By the time of "The Thought" (Frege, 1956) Frege seems to have changed his mind. There is no longer talk of the true and false. Instead, truth has become a unique property of thoughts. On this reading, Frege has become an interpretivist.

Instead, truth emerges as the property that we use to make sense of language users and thinkers. However, truth is not a norm. Language users and thinkers are not following any rules. So, truth is not a mark of approval or a norm of judgement. However, we cannot make sense of a creature as rational unless we can describe its behaviour according to the constitutive ideal of rationality. But, that's just means its mental life is, more or less, organised according to the rules of rationality. Those rules are descriptions, but it is a description of the rational connections between things, rather than the causal order of things. This does not require any sort of non-naturalism. Instead, the interpretivist maintains that the natural sciences are not adequate to make sense of rational behaviour. The reason for this is that to make sense of rational behaviour one needs to make sense of the point of view of a rational agent. The theorist is trying to understand how the world strikes the agent. But that, she maintains, can only be done in terms of what the agent takes to be true. Thus, truth accounts for content because we make sense of content in terms of what it is that an agent holds to be true. It is truth, in the guise of holding true, that you need to grasp to gain explicit knowledge of content. This leaves truth as a substantial but irreducible property.

T5. Pragmatic phenomenalism is the view developed and defended by Robert Brandom (1994). Like Horwich, Brandom thinks that there is no more to intentionality than what we do. However, he differs from Horwich in thinking that our propensities to accept statements has to be understood in normative terms. As a result, one cannot understand a practice except in terms of the normative attitudes of practitioners. In this respect Brandom differs from minimalists and redundancy theorists by resisting any attempt to provide a reductive account of content. Because Brandom refuses the siren call of a reductive account, there is no way of explaining what it is for something to have content without using truth and other traditional semantic vocabulary. But it is not in virtue of having a truth value that, for example, an utterance is a representation. Rather, it is a representation in virtue of having a particular place in a rational practice, as a result of occupying that place it has a truth value. On this view, what it is for a sentence to be true is for it to be correctly called true. The truth predicate is an evaluative predicate, but truth is an insubstantial property.

T6. Evaluative views share the interpretive and phenomenalist thought that intentionality cannot be understood as a relation between contentful items and things in

the world. They also reject any deflationary hopes with respect to truth. Truth remains the substantial property which accounts for the point of view of an agent. However, the evaluativist shares with the pragmatic phenomenalist the thought that behaving rationally requires taking part in a practice. Truth becomes the substantial property that organises language use and thinking. So, understanding somebody's point of view requires coming to understand the way truth organises a rational practice. That in turn requires understanding what it is to perform the kind of actions that make up the practice. But, unlike on the pragmatic phenomenalist views, that is not a matter of undertaking commitments to behave in a particular way, it is a matter of understanding what it is for something to be true. Those somethings are sentences. Practitioners who are behaving correctly try to make sure that the sentences they hold to be true are sentences which are true. The truth values of sentences affects the way they can legitimately be used.

§7 Summary and the Way Ahead

Using language and thinking are rational activities. Meaning and mental content are captured by describing the capacity to engage in those activities. So, the aim of the theorist of meaning is an account of what it is to use a language and the aim of a theorist of thought is an account of what it is to be a thinker. Being able to use a language requires understanding a language and being able to think requires being able to recognise and respond to the world. Those abilities are modelled by a theory of meaning and a theory of thought. A theory of meaning and a theory of thought are both bipartite theories. The two parts are a theory of content and a theory of force. The theory of content will be a description of the truth conditions of complete items in the relevant activity. The theory of force will be a description of the sort of move that can be made within the activity. Combining the two parts puts the theorist in a position to pick out performances within the activity and say what is (standardly) done by them. Those theories will, at least, be equivalent to a truth conditional theory.

As, on any view of each activity, the activities are modelled by a bipartite truth-conditional theory, differences in understanding language and thought come out in terms of differences in understanding truth. The dispute is in terms of what truth applies to and

why it applies to it. In the remainder of the thesis I am going to use the explicit knowledge constraint to show that truth has to be an evaluative and substantial property of sentences. I start that project by turning my attention two types of view that both, in their different ways, deny that there is any problem with truth. These two types of view are minimalism and designation views.

Chapter 2

Force and Significance

In the previous chapter I showed that thinking was a rational activity, and that at least some uses of language were rational actions. I showed that a theory of meaning needs to be a description of the activity of using a language, and that a theory of thought needs to be a description of the activity of thinking. Whatever one thinks about the rationality of language use and the nature and status of languages, a theory of meaning for a language needs to account for the way the activity of using a language proceeds, and why it proceeds like that. The same goes *mutatis mutandis* for a theory of thought. I showed that, whatever one's view of language or thought, the activity of using a language and the activity of thinking both had to be describable by a bipartite truth conditional theory. In the linguistic case the theory needs to put the theorist in a position to give the semantic role of any expression in a language. This is achieved by a characterisation of the different types of linguistic act, and an account of the content of each sentence. But, because any view of truth needs to make sense of the equivalence schema, any account of content will, thereby, be an account of truth conditions and any account of force shows how the truth value of a sentence affects the way it is (standardly) used. The same, with the relevant substitutions, goes for a theory of thought. The end result is that, whatever one's view of language or thought, a theory of meaning or a theory of thought will be formulateable as a bipartite truth-conditional theory. However, one's understanding of such a theory depends on how one thinks about the nature of language use and thinking. Because truth is central to a theory of meaning and theory of thought, how one understands language use or thinking will be reflected in how one understands truth. As a result, different views of language use and thinking are characterised by different views of truth. In addition, the correct account of language use and thinking will reveal the correct account of truth.

In this chapter I am going to look at minimalist views of truth and traditional correspondence theories, designation views. Minimalist views of truth deny that there is anything more to truth than its function as a device of semantic or mental assent. In

addition, they deny that there is any problem with intentionality. The idea is that truth talk allows us to go on talking about reality while referring to sentences or thoughts. However, as Hornsby, perhaps cheekily, suggests, a better way of characterising minimalism is that "truth and falsity are terms for going on talking while adding a word or two" (Hornsby, 1997, p. 8n). I am going to show that Hornsby's characterisation is accurate, and, consequently, the position hopeless. Designation views of truth treat truth as a relation between a truth-bearer and truth-maker. For them, intentionality is an extrinsic relation between linguistic/mental items and things in the world. On the traditional developments of the view, grasping content allows one an a priori insight into that extrinsic relation. Both views deny that there is any more to the rationality of language use/thinking than using sentences/thoughts to further ones projects. On minimalist views, this is because there is no more to meaning than what we tend to do. On a designation view, this is because there is nothing right about correspondence between linguistic/mental items and things in the world. As a result, an account of the activity of using language/thinking is simply an account of what the subject tends to do. I am going to use the explicit knowledge constraint to show that both types of view are untenable. I am going to show that minimalist views are unable to account for our explicit knowledge of content, and I will show that designation views are unable to account for our explicit knowledge of force.

The structure of the chapter is as follows. I first distinguish between two senses of "normative".These are full-blown prescriptive normativity and norm-relativity. The former requires substantial oughts, the latter merely measuring rods. I show that apart from linguistic practice views and mental practice views, no account of language use or thinking requires anything more than norm-relativity. This requires them to be deflationary about linguistic or mental correctness. This is a thought that is going to occur throughout the thesis. Ultimately, I am going to show that intentionality is a normative property. Having made this distinction, I turn my attention to use theories of meaning. I distinguish between broad and narrow use theories; the former treat intentionality as intrinsic to what we do with language, the latter seek to understand what we do in terms of the dispositions to use language, and then seek to make sense of intentionality after that. I point out that there is the same distinction within functional organisation theories of the mental. I then turn my attention to minimalist views of truth.

These combine a narrow use theory of meaning with a narrow functional organisation theory of content. In addition, they deny that intentionality is a substantial property of sentences and thoughts. I show that they do not have the resources to make sense of our explicit knowledge of meaning or mental content. Finally, I consider designation views of truth. These treat intentionality as an extrinsic property of sentences or thoughts. The idea is that meaningful items designate things in the world. I show that they are unable to account for our ability to understand the activities of language use or thinking, because they can only make sense of our grasp of truth conditions at the expense of making sense of our ability to distinguish truth from falsity.

§1 Types of Normativity

In the previous chapter I distinguished between descriptive and prescriptive rules. I also pointed out that, except on linguistic or mental practice views, a theory of meaning/thought made sense of the activity in question by appealing to descriptive rules which best explain the way language users/thinkers tend to go on. In this section, I am going to show that if linguistic or mental rules are descriptive rules, then talk of correctness with respect to language or the mental needs to be deflated. This is because there are no longer linguistic or mental shoulds.

1.1 Normativity and norm relativity

To help make this point I am going to borrow a distinction of Anandi Hattiangadi's. Hattiangadi distinguishes between what she labels "normativity" and "norm relativity". Here is how she makes the distinction:

> [T]he word ‘normative’ is ambiguous. First, it can mean ‘prescriptive’ or ‘action-guiding’.... Second, ‘normative’ can mean ‘relative to a norm or a standard’.... The distinction between these two senses of ‘normative’ will turn out to be crucial. To mark the distinction, I will take ‘prescriptive’ or ‘action-guiding’ to be the primary sense of ‘normative’, and I will use ‘normative’ henceforth exclusively in this sense. I will use ‘norm-relative’ to mean ‘relative to a norm or standard’.
>
> (Hattiangadi, 2007, p. 37)

This suggests the following definitions:

> NORMATIVE: something is normative if and only if it prescribes or prohibits a course of action.
>
> NORM-RELATIVE: something is norm-relative if and only if it provides a standard by which something can be classified[64].

1.2 Norm Relativity and Correctness

Hattiangadi's key thought is that norm relativity is sufficient to account for linguistic and mental correctness. The thought is that just as the standard metre bar in Paris provides a referent which determines what it is for something to be a metre in length, and hence classified as 1m long, the meaning of a word provides a standard by which something can be classified as that thing. In a similar way, the content of the concept provides a standard by which something can be classed as falling under that concept. I am going to focus on the linguistic case because it is easier to frame things in linguistic terms. But, the same thing applies *mutatis mutandis* to thought. Given the nature of the largest thing visible from my window, and the meaning of the word "tree", the sentence, "the largest thing visible from my window is a tree" is true. It cannot be that being true is something that a sentence ought to be, because there are no oughts in the picture. So, a sentence being true is not something which a sentence ought to be. Instead, the view is that descriptions, being meaningful, say something, and when things in the world match how things are described, the description is true. Depending on the theory's view of meaning, "matching" can either be read as a substantial property of a sentence or as a marker that the standards have been met. On either view there is nothing substantially correct about true descriptions. The only notions of correctness available are means-end and categorical. A true description may or may not be useful for the purposes of a speaker, or may or may not be morally permissible.

It is natural to describe a true description as correct. So, somebody like Hattiangadi, needs an account of why that might be so. There is an explanation

64 Hattiangadi's own definition of norm relativity is "Norm-Relativity: S means F by t → (a)(S applies x 'correctly' to a ↔ a is f)" (Hattiangadi 2007, 56). Hattiangadi defines norm relativity as a thesis about language. My definition is wider. It aims to capture the idea that, for example, the metre provides a standard by which something can be classified as a metre.

available, and Hattiangadi adopts it. One feature of a standard is that it divides items (objects or situations) into two classes: those that meet the standard, and those that do not. Descriptions, being standards, divide items (possible situations) into two classes: those that are compatible with the description and those that are not compatible with the description. It is natural to describe a use of a sentence as correct when no actual situation is in the incompatible class. Words, also being descriptive standards, have an extension, and items in the world either fall into that extension or out of it. A situation is determined by the properties and relations of the objects which make up the situation. So, whether or not all situations in the actual world are compatible with a description is determined by which items in the actual world are in the extensions of the words used. The result is that the notion of correctness here is simply that of being the way described. As Hattiangadi writes:

> Consider, for instance, the statement that the word ‘square’ applies correctly to a particular table top. This is not a normative statement—it is not equivalent to the statement that you ought to say that the table top is square quite independently of any desire (such as the desire to tell the truth, for instance); rather, it is equivalent to the straightforwardly non-normative judgement that the table top is square and that, in being square, it meets the standard for the correct application of the word ‘square’. To say that some use of a term is ‘correct’ is thus merely to describe it in a certain way—in light of the norm or standard set by the meaning of the term.
>
> (Hattiangadi, 2006, pp. 224–225)

This is deflationary about correctness. There are two ways of reading the claim to equivalence. The first reading is that the judgement that "square" applies correctly to a particular tabletop is equivalent to the judgement that the tabletop is square. This is the redundancy reading. It makes the form of words "applies correctly to" a redundant, baroque way of saying that the x is F. The second reading, which given the lack of a comma after "square" is the natural reading, is that the judgement that "square" applies correctly to a particular tabletop is equivalent to the judgement of the conjunction of the judgements *that the table top is square* and *that it meets the standards of the correct application of the word "square"*. This is the deflationary reading. It acknowledges a use for the phrase "applies correctly to". It allows us to make claims about language. Ultimately, however, those claims are transparent. How can, "it meets the standards for the correct application of" be understood? It has to be that meeting the standard for

correct application is simply being the way described, in this case being square.

1.3 Norm Relativity and Rules

A deflationary view of correctness does not preclude there being rules of meaning. It is a familiar thought that there is no practical end to the set of situations to which an expression might apply. For example, "horse" does not just apply to Morley Street, or even the finite set of all horses that have ever been, but to all horses that have ever been and will ever be in any location whatsoever. No one could give the extension of "horse" by listing every horse. Given this, as theorists, for any expression, we need to find a statement which determines the infinite class of uses which are correct. This can be done by formulating a rule. Hattiangadi suggests that the general form looks like this:

If an expression, t, means F, then:

R1: (x)(t applies correctly to x ↔ x is f)

(Hattiangadi, 2006, p. 223)[65].

But, a rule like R1 is not a prescriptive rule. It does not tell any speaker how to use an expression, nor does it allow for any specifically linguistic evaluation. As Hattiangadi writes, "R1 supplies a *description* of my uses of t as those that are 'correct' and those that are 'incorrect'" (Hattiangadi, 2006, p. 223). On these views, rules for use are descriptions which capture the standard use of an expression. But "standard use" is simply the use which best accounts for meaning. There is no linguistic reason to use a word in accordance with the standard use. A rule like R1 is a rule which describes an expression. If it is a good description, somebody who understands the rule knows what descriptive standard is/tends to be provided by the expression.

Of course, the same thing applies to the realm of the mental. If concepts merely provide standards of application to objects, and whole thoughts standards of application to situations, then there are no distinctively mental shoulds. A particular concept applies to some items and consequently has an extension. A particular thought applies to some situations and consequently has an extension. It is convenient to label as correct the application of the concept to an item in its extension, and similarly for whole thoughts.

65 Hattiangadi uses capital letters to name meanings. In this terminology, "red" means RED. so, if "red" means RED, then for all surfaces, x, "red" applies to x ↔ x is red. The convention is due to Horwich (Horwich, 1998b, 15).

When it comes to thinking about concepts and thoughts we need a way of specifying their extension, and we do this by appeal to descriptive rules. These rules will capture the standard use of concepts and thoughts. They do not provide prescriptions.

Now, the aim of the theorist of meaning and the aim of the theorist of thought is to provide a description of language use/thinking. These are non-finite activities. The theorist needs a way of describing an infinite range of possible uses. She does that by formulating descriptive rules such that a grasp of those rules is sufficient to understand how a particular group of speakers/a particular thinker tends to go on. In the use case and the functionalist case these rules are idealisations from the habits of language users/a thinker in the way that the ideal gas law is an idealisation from the habits of actual gases. In the meaning fact and conceptual fact cases the rules are statements of pre-given standards. Neither the idealisations nor the standards provide any reason to use a sentence/thought in some particular way. In addition, I have already shown that those rules can be formulated using a truth predicate. But it should now be apparent that those rules are generalisations. They do not provide any reason to use sentences or thoughts one way rather than another. There is no linguistic reason why, for example, an assertion ought to be true. So, the truth predicate used to formulate those rules is not an evaluative predicate. At most, it might mark a relationship between truth-bearer and truth-maker.

§2 Use Theories and Truth

In this section I am going to turn to "use theories of meaning". As I understand the term "use theory of meaning" a use theory holds that there is no more to meaning than what we do. As a result, it treats a language as a product of the ways a particular group of speakers go on. A theory of meaning, on this view, need do no more than describe those ways of going on. This can be done in two ways. The first treats what we do with a language as no less than talking about the world. On such a view of meaning, intentionality is a substantial property of utterances. Truth is a substantial property that accounts for intentionality. The second way treats what we do in terms of our dispositions to produce verbal behaviour. It denies that an understanding of language use requires making sense of how the world strikes the subject. As Hornsby puts it:

> Such a dispute is part of a broader dispute about the nature of intentionality, and is reflected in a disagreement as to what the use of language should be thought to encompass. According to the conception already employed here, use includes all of the countlessly many things that people are heard as doing when a fellow speaker, or a theorist supplied with a theory of content and force, comes to understand them. This is a broad conception. According to another conception of use, which is invoked by two-task theorists from whose standpoint "use" and "truth-conditions" are in opposition, use includes only such facts about what people do with language as can be stated without yet allowing that speakers relate themselves to the world. This is a narrow conception.
>
> (Hornsby, 1989, p. 561)

The broad conception results in an interpretive theory of truth. The narrow conception results in a minimalist, redundancy or designation theory of truth.

2.1 Two Types of Use Theory

Both a broad and a narrow use theory start from the thought that there is no more to meaning than what speakers do. The key thought is the meaning is meant to be open to empirical investigation. The dispute between broad and narrow theories is a dispute over what concepts are required for that empirical investigation. The broad theorist maintains that truth and other full-blown semantic concepts are indispensable, and the narrow theorist maintains that it can all be done in terms of dispositions. When it comes to describing the linguistic behaviour of a particular group of speakers, the theorist needs to devise a model which will account for actual speaker behaviour. This empirical model should be such that if you were to grasp it, you would, given the requisite practical abilities, be able to understand what has been modelled. Now, competent speakers within a linguistic community, by and large, understand what their fellow language users are trying to do with their utterances by distinguishing between what is (standardly) done linguistically by using a sentence in that way and the point of so using it. So, understanding a model which captures what is (standardly) done by any use of a sentence by members of a linguistic community will be one that, given the requisite practical abilities, would allow you to understand the utterances of members of that community. In other words, it will account for actual speaker behaviour.

This is not to say that linguistic competence within a particular language

community is a matter of previously gained knowledge of conventions or regularities. It is significantly easier to understand people who tend to behave linguistically like you because you can come forearmed with a sense of what they are liable to mean by their utterances. But, one way of explaining this is in terms of what Davidson labels a "prior theory" (Davidson, 1985, p. 480). He calls this characterisation of an ability "a theory" because "a description of the interpreter's competence requires a recursive account" (Davidson, 1985, p. 479), and not because competent speakers are meant to know such a theory. If you and I are both speakers of the same language, we will both have a largely shared and sophisticated prior theory for each other. That is, our respective abilities to understand each other will, by and large, be describable by the same recursive theory. It is this prior theory, this ability, that, on such views, a theory of meaning is trying to model. It is not a theory of English, because English, or any other language, is not of any philosophical interest. Instead, it is a description of the shared ability of sophisticated language users for whom the barriers to communication are low. Alternatively, the use theorist might maintain that the first meaning of an utterance is the dictionary meaning. In which case she will think that linguistic competence is a matter of previously gained knowledge of conventions or regularities. However, those conventions come about because of the ways that individuals tend to behave linguistically. So, use theories that accept that the first meaning of an utterance is the meaning in a language also are characterisations of the way that a group of people tend to behave linguistically.

What that model needs to do is find and state regularities of behaviour. Those regularities take the form of descriptive rules. But, as the potential behaviour to be modelled is infinite, and as actual behaviour includes novel and uncommon utterances, those rules cannot describe any statistical regularities of actual performances. Instead, just as the ideal gas law explains the way actual gases tend to behave, it builds an ideal model of linguistic behaviour, and uses that model to explain how languages users in fact operate. As the empirical significance that the theory needs to capture is what competent speakers would understand to have been done linguistically by any possible utterance, the theory needs a description of the types of things there are to be done linguistically and the semantic content of any particular utterance. However, recognising that there are types of things to be done linguistically involves recognising

something systematic about linguistic behaviour. To do that, it appeals to the notion of a sentence and provides rules which govern the different uses of sentences. That leaves "sentence" as a term of art in an empirical theory of speaker behaviour. A sentence is a theoretical posit used to talk about an empirically significant class of utterances. In this respect it is like the ideal gas. It is a theoretical entity used to capture what is empirically significant about a class of possible and actual utterances. The same is true of words. Here is Davidson expressing the view:

> One good way to think of sentences themselves is as shapes, whether verbal, written, or otherwise signed.… We would have no special interest in the shapes if we did not think of them as sometimes instantiated with communicative intent and the instances understood by an audience. Nevertheless, we need these abstract entities if we want to theorize. We cannot say much in a theoretical vein about linguistic communication without talking of words and sentences. Names and predicates are likewise usually treated as abstract entities, though we may also call instances of these types names and predicates. The abstract entities – words and expressions built from words – are indispensable when we want to describe the syntax, semantics and logical relations of the instances.
>
> (Davidson, 2005, pp. 121–122)

Utterances in those classes will be of a variety of different types: statings, questionings, commandings and so on, but they will be related in empirically significant ways. The idea is that the connection between the different utterances in each class can be modelled as being different ways of using the same sentence. The thought being that there is a common content to utterances within a class and that the utterances themselves are different ways of presenting that content. In other words, what is required is a theory of content and a theory of force.

A theory of force shows how the truth value of a sentence affects the way it is used. So, what are required are rules which show how the truth value of a sentence affects the types of ways it is used. As those rules are part of a model of the way speakers tend to behave, what are being described are the different types of standard uses (in my sense of standard) of sentences. Having acknowledged that what links the different utterances in any class can be captured by the truth value of the sentence used to discuss that class, the next task is to show how the truth value of that sentence is determined. This is done by appeal to more theoretical entities, "sub-sentential

expressions". Each sub-sentential expression makes a systematic difference to the truth values of sentences in which it can occur. But, this is to recognise structure in the actual and possible utterances that competent speakers might and do make. It is to assign a class of linguistically incomplete but significant utterances to each sub-sentential expression. What makes these utterances linguistically incomplete is that they cannot be understood as having a role separate from their role in utterances which are describable as a sentence. Because the standard use of a sentence is determined by its truth value, identifying the classes picked out by sub-sentential expressions is a matter of showing how each sub-sentential expression makes a systematic difference to the truth values of sentences in which it can occur. In other words, linguistically incomplete utterances are understood as making a systematic difference to the truth conditions of complete utterances.

In summary, a theory of meaning uses sentences of the form, 'S is true if and only if p' (where S is the name of a sentence and p a sentence in use) to capture something which, in conjunction with a theory of force, models competent linguistic behaviour. Truth talk is used to enable theorists to talk about sentences. Instances of the truth schema give, in conjunction with a theory of force, give the standard uses of named sentences.

2.2 Use Theories and Truth

On any use theory, truth is not an evaluative property. The reason is simple: what makes a use of language correct is it achieving its purpose, or, on some occasions, being morally commendable. Use theorists cannot accept that truth is an evaluative property. However, the use theorist can acknowledge that truth is a substantial property. On the broad conception of use, a grasp of truth is required to make sense of your interlocutors. To understand what your interlocutors mean you need to make sense of what it is that they hold true. On such a view, no reductive account of truth is possible. Understanding what your interlocutors hold true is a matter of grasping what they are saying. On the narrow conception, all that is required is knowing how your interlocutors are liable to behave. On the narrow conception of use, the meaning of a word is engendered by some fact which explains a speaker's disposition to use it in the way that she does. To

understand meaning is to know how words are used. As a result, it adopts a deflationary attitude towards the truth predicate of a theory of meaning. There is some account of the content of sentences available. This will be given in terms of whatever fact is taken to explain a group of speakers dispositions to use words in the way that they do, and then truth's function as a device semantic sense appealed to in order to give a bipartite truth conditional theory of meaning. This fact might be a relation, or something that explains the relation, between words and world. In which case, the narrow theorist will be a designation theorist. Alternatively, the fact will be entirely at the level of our disposition to use words. In which case, the narrow theorist will be a minimalist or redudancy theorist.

2.3 Use Theories and the Mental

A use theory of meaning can be combined with any view of the mental. You could, for example, believe that thinking was a matter of an a priori grasp of thoughts and their component concepts. If so, you could maintain that sentences were conventional ways of expressing thoughts because words were conventional ways of expressing concepts. However, given the empiricist motivations for use theory, the most common bedfellow is a functional organisation theory of thoughts. Such a view treats having a particular propositional attitude as being in a particular functional state. Talk of "thoughts" and "concepts" are useful in an empirical theory of the mind of a thinker. Like "sentence" and "sub-sentential expression" in the mouth of an empirical generalisation theorist, "thought" and "concept" are terms of art. They are introduced as part of an empirical model of thinker behaviour. They are that to which a standard functional role can be attributed, where a standard functional role is that which best explains the particular dispositions of thinkers[66].

66 In one respect a functional theory of thought is easier to construct than an empirical generalisation theory for a language. This respect is because there is a great deal of voluntary control over our linguistic behaviour. The same is not true of our mental behaviour. The standard functional role of a thought may well coincide with the dispositions of the thinker in question. However, this does not stop "thought" and "concept" being terms of art, nor does it mean that such a theory of thought describes the actual functional setup of the thinker. Real thinkers are limited. There will be many things to which they never turn their attention, and many thoughts which will be too complicated for

A functional theory of thought is also a bipartite theory. It gives a general theory of propositional attitudes, and supplements that with a theory of content. The theory of propositional attitudes is done in terms of the truth values of the thoughts involved, and is married up with a theory of content. That theory of content is an account of the truth conditions of thoughts. However, the content of a thought is fully determined by the functional state of a thinker. That is, mental content is determined by the sort of transitions, from mental state to mental state and from mental state to action, that a particular thinker is disposed to make. That is simply a question of transition between states. It is a matter of the capacity of thinkers. As a result, a bipartite truth-conditional theory of thought is a description of the dispositional setup of a thinker. Again, as in the linguistic case, there is a broad and a narrow conception of the dispositional setup of the thinker. On the broad conception, intentionality is taken to be a substantial property of mental states. One cannot understand the dispositional setup of the thinker except in terms of what the thinker takes to be true. On such a view, truth is held to be a substantial property. These are views, like Davidson's, which maintain that mentality has to be understood according to the constitutive ideal of rationality. On the narrow conception, understanding the dispositional setup of a thinker is something that can be done without reference to how the world strikes the thinker. What is required is a way of identifying mental states without reference to any intrinsic intentional properties, and then accounting for the kind of transitions thinkers are liable to make.

As a functional organisation theory of thought describes how a particular thinker is liable to behave, truth provides no kind of evaluative standard. The only evaluation possible is in terms of whether or not an agent's actual mental behaviour is a good way of achieving that agent's goals. So, as in the linguistic case, the functional organisation theorist cannot be a pragmatic phenomenalist or a mental practice theorist. The broad functional organisation theorist adopts an interpretive theory of truth, but, if she wishes to deny that there is anything special about intentionality, she needs to provide a non-truth-conditional account of content. There are two ways to move here. The first is to account for content according to causes-cum-functions. This looks to thought-world relations to make sense of content. Different ways of developing the view will result either in a designation view of truth or a redundancy view of truth. Finally, and crucially

them to entertain. For this reason, the actual dispositions of a thinker are not going to be described by a theory of thought.

for this chapter, the functional organisation theorist can be a minimalist. In this case, she will treat content as a matter of our dispositions to move between mental states.

Before moving on I want to make something clear about minimalism. This is that the dispositions which are of interest to the minimalist can quite legitimately make reference to how things are in the world. As Harman puts it, "[w]hat makes something the concept red it is in part the way in which the concept is involved in the perception of red objects in the external world. What makes something the concept of danger is in part the way in which the concept is involved in thoughts that affect action in certain ways" (Harman, 1982, p. 247). However, the key thought behind minimalism is that reference, satisfaction, denotation and other semantic vocabulary is as trivial as truth. Assuming for the moment we can make sense of a thinker being disposed to respond to red objects in such a way that we want to say it possesses the concept red, what the minimalist denies is that this is because its belief that, say, the apple it sees before it is red has the content it has because of the mental values of the concepts involved. Instead, it is functionally organised in such a way that it responds to red things. If it became more conceptually sophisticated it could become disposed to judge that the concept red is satisfied by all and only red things.

§3 Minimalism

In this section I am going to turn my attention to minimalist views of truth. I start by looking at the views of Paul Horwich because he has developed and defended just such a position. I show that he cannot make sense of explicit knowledge of content. The problems are not unique to him. I go on to show that treating language use and thinking as just so much behaviour requires there to be something which has substantial intentional properties. I take it that intentional items are things that are about situations and that situation is a way for things to be. An intentional item is about some way for things to be. In so doing it has intentional properties. Those intentional properties are a matter of the what situation the intentional item is about and the manner in which it is about that way for the world to be. So, the assertion that Rose speaks Spanish is about Rose speaking Spanish. It does so by claiming that she does. The desire that Lisa leaves the police force is about Lisa leaving the police force. It does so by positively evaluating

that outcome. Thoughts and sentences are simply about ways for things to be. There is no particular manner in which a sentence or thought is about a situation. We make sense of one thing being about a way for things to be in terms of truth and some notion of correctness. So, the belief that snow is white is about snow's being white because, there is a sense, in which it is correct only if it is true, which is to say, only if snow is white.

What the minimalist does is deny that there needs to be any explanation of that correctness. In other words, she denies that we need any explanation of intentionality. She deflates all intentional properties. Instead, she maintains that, because we can find a pattern in the way a word is used or a concept deployed, we can explain intentionality without appeal to any further properties. In particular, she maintains that we do not need any account of correctness beyond saying that a use of a word or deployment of a concept is correct when it is in accordance with its explanatory pattern. I take the failure of minimalism to show that there must be some further account of what makes some uses of words or some deployments of concepts correct and others incorrect. In other words, we do need some account of intentionality. It follows that there has to be some further account of what makes a truth-bearer true or false than is given by some version of the equivalence schema.

3.1 Horwich's Use Theory

Horwich is someone who has a minimalist view. He thinks that truth is no more than a device of denominalisation (Horwich, 1998a, p. 5). In addition, he has a deflationary view of meaning (Horwich, 1998b). As I see it, the raison d'être of the view is that there is no problem of intentionality. He figures here because he is a good example of such a minimalist view. But the problems are not unique to Horwich. They are problems for any minimalist view, no matter how the details go further down the line. Like all minimalists, Horwich thinks that there are no prescriptive rules with respect to meaning and truth. Instead, like Hattiangadi, Horwich thinks that when it comes to words, there are meanings, and grasp of meaning provides a yardstick by which word use can be described as "correct" or "incorrect". In addition, they also agree that a usage being 'correct' is a matter of its being consistent with the meaning of the word. Horwich has a view as to the sort of things that constitute meaning. Horwich has

what he calls "a use theory of meaning" (UTM). He outlines it as follows:

> It begins by contending that the meaning of a word is the common factor in the explanations of its numerous occurrences, and proceeds to argue that the underlying basis of each word's meaning is the (idealized) law governing its usage—a law that dictates the 'acceptance conditions' of certain specified sentences containing it.
>
> (Horwich, 2005, p. 27)

Those (idealised) laws are, as already noted, descriptive laws. They are generalisations from the behaviour of speakers. It is an important consequence of the view that the class of facts that constitute meaning can be, and Horwich thinks is, a heterogeneous class. In addition, there is no requirement that a word meaning what it does is – for example "dog" meaning dog – is a matter of its standing in relation to a class of entities – for example "dog" being true of anything that is a domesticated canine. In summary, different types of fact can explain the way different words are used, and there is no reason why any sort of word-world relation needs to be invoked in those explanations.

The upshot is that Horwich is someone who has a narrow conception of use. For Horwich the fact which explains our disposition to use a word is what he labels a "basic acceptance property" (Horwich, 1998b, p. 44). The basic acceptance property of a word is a statement of a regularity of acceptance that best explains the overall use of that word. So, Horwich contends, the basic acceptance property of the word "true" "is the inclination to accept instances of the schema 'the proposition *that p* is true if and only if *p*'" (*loc. cit.*). As result, Horwich claims that:

> According to the use theory of meaning, our grasp of the truth conditions of (say) "snow is white" is the product of the following three-stage process. First, we know the meaning of "snow is white" by knowing its mode of construction and the uses of its component words. Second, we know the meaning of "*true*" by accepting instances of 'The proposition *that p* is true iff *p*' and accepting '(u)[u is *true* iff ((∃x)(u expresses x & x is true)]', and then inferring instances of the disquotation schema, '"*p*" is *true* iff *p*'– including '"snow is white" is *true* if and only if snow is white'. And third, insofar as we understand all the constituents of that biconditional, we can be said to know *that "snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white.* Thus our knowledge of the truth conditions of "snow is white" *derives from* our knowledge of its meaning.
>
> (Horwich, 1998b, pp. 72–73)

On such a view gaining knowledge of the meaning of "true" does not give you any more information about meaning. It is simply a device that allows us to, among other things, model linguistic behaviour.

3.2 Explicit Knowledge

However, modelling linguistic behaviour is not all that there is to a theory of meaning. A (correct) theory of meaning is an expression of the explicit knowledge of the theorist. As long as the theorist can make sense of explicit knowledge of meaning, she can account for her own explicit knowledge of her theory. One approach might be to provide a model of explicit knowledge, but not just any model will do. A theory which consisted of theorems of the form 'S means that p' would be sufficient as a model of explicit knowledge. Such a theory does state what somebody knows who has explicit knowledge of the meaning of a language. However, it does not meet the explicit knowledge constraint. Meeting the explicit knowledge constraint requires showing how it is possible that we can have explicit knowledge of meaning. That requires doing more than stating what somebody knows when they have explicit knowledge of meaning. The challenge is to show how someone can move from practical competence to explicit knowledge. At the very least then, a theory which generates theorems of the form 'S means that p' would need supplementing with an account of how somebody could move from having the requisite practical abilities to understanding the claims of the theory.

A bipartite truth-conditional theory of meaning is adequate as a model of linguistic behaviour, but inadequate as a model of explicit knowledge. To see this, consider that a theory of force provides a general description of different types of speech act. Sticking with assertion, it claims that assertions present as true. If the nature of truth is exhausted by the function of a truth predicate to be a device of semantic ascent, a truth conditional theory of meaning for a language models the linguistic competence of speakers. However, it cannot be all that a speaker with explicit knowledge of meaning knows. The reason is straightforward. Treating truth as a device of semantic ascent allows the theorist to describe the use and content of a sentence, but only because sentences have contents and uses which can be described without truth talk. To make things easier I will stick with assertions. Somebody who explicitly knows

that the sentence "Frege died in 1925" is true if and only if Frege died in 1925, and who explicitly knows what is claimed by an assertion of "Frege died in 1925" is somebody who explicitly knows what that sentence means[67].

So, an account of this explicit knowledge needs to make sense of how reflective speakers know two things:

1. "Frege died in 1925" is true if and only if Frege died in 1925
2. What is claimed by an assertion of "Frege died in 1925".

A theory of force will tell us that an assertion of a sentence presents it as true. To present a sentence as true is to discharge the biconditional which specifies its truth conditions. The correct theory of force for English entails that an assertion of "Frege died in 1925" presents the sentence in question as true, while a theory of content says that presenting "Frege died in 1925" as true is to discharge the biconditional 1. Discharging 1 is done either by using the sentence, "'Frege died in 1925' is true" or the sentence, "Frege died in 1925".

However, so far, what we have is a description of standard behaviour. Nothing has been said which tells us what is done by an assertoric use of a sentence. Clearly we do not learn what it is to present a sentence as true by saying that it is what is claimed by instances of sentences with the form 'S is true'. The theorist is going to focus on uses that do not predicate truth of a named sentence. However, it does not help to claim that using, "Frege died in 1925" is asserting that sentence. It is true that asserting the sentence "Frege died in 1925" is asserting that Frege died in 1925, but we still need an account of what it is to assert that Frege died in 1925. There are two ways to move here. The first is to give a substantial account of what it is to present as true. The second is to supplement a truth conditional theory of meaning with another theory of meaning. The former move is not open to the minimalist. The raison d'être of her theory is that there is no more to truth than it being a device of semantic ascent. But, if truth is a device of semantic ascent there must be something to be done with sentences which can be explained independently of a truth conditional theory of meaning.

How does Horwich account for his explicit understanding of English, or any other language that he speaks? Horwich cannot appeal to a grasp of facts like "'dog' means DOG". For one thing, as he points out, this is, in his view, trivially true. Horwich

67 The example is due to Dummett who makes the same point (Dummett, 1981, p. 444).

is quite prepared to countenance entities as meanings. What he is not prepared to countenance is that these entities do any work in explaining language use. "Dog" meaning DOG is a consequence of the fact that there is a regular use for the word "dog" in English. But, on Horwich's view, "'dog' means DOG" is a tautology (Horwich, 1998b, 16). What a speaker has to know who has explicit knowledge of a language is the idealised law governing the use of "dog". It looks like that is just not the sort of thing which can be known by even extremely reflective speakers. Horwich puts the objection rather nicely:

> For a sophisticated scientific inquiry might be required in order to reach the conclusion that "dog" has property '*u*(*x*)' [a usage property]; yet without having pursued any such inquiry, we nevertheless understand the word perfectly well. Nor can one reply that the inquiry is needed only to make us consciously aware of the fact that "dog" has '*u*(*x*)'—a fact which is already known unconsciously by anyone who understands the word. For the postulation of any such unconscious knowledge is a matter of scientific speculation; whereas we feel certain that there is something we know when we understand a word.
>
> (Horwich, 1998b, pp. 16–17)

If Horwich puts the objection, then he must have something he takes to be a rejoinder. Indeed this is the case. Horwich appeals to "implicit knowledge". He suggests:

> The fact that the expert and hence communal deployment of "dog" is the result of the word's having use property '*u*(*x*)', constitutes the fact that it means what it does—i.e. that it means DOG—in the communal language. If a community member's deployment of the word results from the same property '*u*(*x*)', then the meaning of "dog" in his idiolect will be the same as its meaning in the communal language. He will then qualify as knowing *implicitly* what the word means, and thereby as understanding it.
>
> (Horwich, 1998b, p. 17)

This might do as a definition of "implicit knowledge". It will not do as a solution to the problem of explicit knowledge. I am very happy to allow for the possibility of speakers operating at the ground floor to go on in regular and empirically describable ways. As this is not going to be a species of automatism, I am very happy to allow Horwich, or anybody else, to label such an ability "implicit knowledge". What I cannot allow is that such "implicit knowledge" can be made explicit by even the most sophisticated scientist without there being more to meaning than communal regularities

of use. To see this consider that some empirical linguist proposes the following as the basic use property for the English word "dog":

> *dog*. the meaning of "dog" is constituted by the fact that the law explaining its overall use is that English speakers accept, "x is a dog ↔ x has the underlying nature of domesticated canines".

For philosophical purposes, the phrase "domesticated canines" can be replaced with "dogs". Unlike Horwich's "'dog' means DOG", "x is a dog ↔ x has the underlying nature of dogs" is not a tautology". It makes a substantial claim about a material equivalence between two propositions. Indeed, when an instance of the left-hand side is true it is because the relevant instance of the right-hand side is true but not vice versa. So, the right-hand side can be taken to be a reductive explanation of the left-hand side. However, for a theory to be a statement of explicit knowledge, the theorist must already have explicit understanding of all the words involved in the statement of her theory. It has to be that she has explicitly understood what it is to be a dog, what it is to accept a sentence, what it is to have an underlying nature and so on – which is to say that she needs not only to possess these concepts, she needs to grasp them.

The problem is that Horwich cannot get inflationary about conceptual content. Horwich has a prior commitment to a minimalist account of truth. So, Horwich has to treat the proper object of a theory of thought as the way a thinker is narrowly disposed to behave, conceptual content is engendered by dispositions to move between mental states[68]. Because Horwich is committed to there being no substantial truth values, those

68 In actual fact Horwich's view is that we think in the language in which we think. Perhaps the clearest example of his views on conceptual content are found in chapter 7 of "Reflections on Meaning" (Horwich 2005, 175-198). Here he develops and defends what he labels 'a very simple picture' of the language of thought hypothesis. The view is that thinking, by and large, proceeds by deploying items in a language of thought that is an internalisation of one's first spoken language. The semantic and syntactic items, of that language get their significance "in virtue of their conceptual roles, or, more specifically, in virtue of certain of their deployments (in postulates, inference patterns, etc.) being explanatorily basic" (Horwich 2005, 183). As Horwich acknowledges, the actual functioning of our language faculty, and thus for Horwich, how we think, depends on myriad causal factors (Horwich 2005, 176). Those inference patterns are generalisations of the way thinkers tend to behave. In order to allow for pre-linguistic thought, there are meant to be some basic concepts which are meant to be in an innate language of thought. However these basic items still have their meanings in terms of their functional roles (Horwich 2005, 184-185). Horwich did not have to adopt a language of thought hypothesis, but he did have to adopt a functional organisation view of the mental.

transitions are not explained in terms of referential relations between mental items and the world. Instead, possessing a concept is a matter of being disposed to behave more or less in line with the idealised law describing the use of that concept. For example the content of the concept of being a dog will be characterised in terms of sensitivity to dogs. Somebody possesses that concept when they display that sensitivity. Roughly, it is a matter of being disposed to distinguish between anything that has the underlying nature of domesticated canines and everything else. That is a practical skill, so somebody who was able to do that possesses what Horwich labels "implicit knowledge" of what it is to be a dog. The problem is showing how somebody who can do that is in a position to gain explicit knowledge of what it is to be a dog. The objection is borrowed from Horwich himself: inquiry is needed to make us consciously aware of the content engendering regularity. It is not enough for that inquiry to take place at the ground floor. It requires first level explicit thought. The output of that reflective realisation is an explicit representation of a practical ability. If she is a competent speaker of English, she will have the linguistic resources to represent her mental abilities. She might say:

> *dog**. Possession of the concept of being a dog is explained by a tendency to respond to some object, x, as a dog ↔ x has the underlying nature of domesticated canines.

*dog** seems to be a reasonable hypothesis as to what it is to possess the concept of being a dog. However, having more than implicit understanding of *dog*,* i.e. more than the tendency to utter and accept *dog*,* requires either the possibility of having explicit knowledge of the concepts involved without having explicit knowledge of the words used, or there being more to language use than regularities of performance. The former disjunct was the hypothesis to be explained on the assumption that the latter disjunct was false, and this Horwich is unable to do. In other words, Horwich's appeal to implicit knowledge as the ability to go on in a regular way does not help him account for explicit understanding of sentential or conceptual content.

3.3 Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions; The Objection Expanded

In effect, Horwich offers a functional theory of both language use and concept possession. He takes it that our linguistic practice is so organised that we find certain

patterns of sentence use compelling. For example, if an English speaker accepts an English sentence, P, and another English sentence, Q, she tends to accept the sentence 'P and Q', and if she accepts the conjunction she tends to accept both conjuncts. This explains the meaning of the English word "and". He then takes it that our mental life is so organised that we find certain patterns of thought compelling. There will be a mental analogue to the way a speaker of English uses "and". Somebody whose mental life is so organised possesses the concept of conjunction. All of which is fine as far as it goes. However, it does not reach to the world. What it does not do is explain how anyone can understand these facts about themselves. Brian Loar puts the point well when he writes:

> Nothing in the description of at least some thoughts' or sentences' conceptual role explains why we assign them references or truth-conditions. It is important to maintain a third person perspective. Apparently a full description of the functional role, for another person x, of a predicate like "magnetic" – that is, how it functions in x's inferences, etc. (think of this as the "horizontal" dimension of description) – abstracts from there being some "vertical" relation such as satisfaction which holds between that predicate and some object y iff y is magnetic. Now this observation is compatible with allowing the conceptual role of "magnetic" involves x being able to judge that "magnetic" denotes y iff y is magnetic. But that is just a fact about x's conceptual organisation and, from our point of view, does not on the face of it explain why we assign x's predicates satisfaction conditions.
>
> (Loar, 1982, p. 274).

Loar, rightly, recognises that there is a difference between, on the one hand, transitions into, out of, and between mental states and, on the other hand, the intentionality of those states. That is, there is a distinction between what, if anything, that state is about and the typical interactions of that state with other states and the environment. Something more needs to be said about why we even so much think of a given dispositional setup as being correct or incorrect depending on how things are in the world. What Loar recognises is that a description of what a thinker can do has two dimensions. The narrow description is in terms of its dispositions. That is, it describes the kinds of transitions, perhaps given a particular set of circumstances, a thinker tends to make. These are the horizontal connections. Describing the horizontal connections between states (and, indeed, from causes to states and from states to outputs) describes the way the thinker tends to go on. However, a full description of what a thinker can do needs to make sense of the thinker as recognising and responding to the world. That is,

the theorist also needs to make sense of why those states are about anything. This is to make sense of the vertical connections. By denying that truth organises language use and thinking, and thus can be used to provide rationalising explanations of what thinkers and speakers do, the deflationary theorist commits herself to the possibility of first describing the horizontal connections and then showing why states that are so identified are about anything at all.

The problem is that the theorist must adopt the third person perspective on the subject. However, in this case the subject is herself. As a subject she only operates in the horizontal dimension. She is not even in a position to appeal to a vertical dimension. But without being in a position to assign a vertical dimension everything the theorist does is on a par with the unreflective speaker and the unreflective thinker. All her beautiful theories are just so much practical behaviour. This precludes the theorist from having explicit awareness of language use or thinking.

Deflationary theories of truth require a theory of meaning or a theory of thought which is given in terms of the horizontal dimension. I am going to focus on the linguistic case for ease of exposition, but what I say can be transposed to the mental. Such a view treats the reference of an expression as a product of the semantic role. Dummett puts the point like this:

> The conception of reference as semantic role is, in itself, purely programmatic: it does not tell us what the semantic roles of expressions of the various logical types are taken to be; it provides no model for a semantic account of our language.… [T] he semantic role of every expression which is a semantically significant unit can always be construed as consisting in its relation to something in the real world. As thus formulated, however, this assumption is empty, since, whatever our conception of the semantic roles of expressions of different types, we can always express it in terms of the relation of reference between expressions and certain non-linguistic entities. On the basis of any semantic account whatever, there will exist a relation of semantic equivalence between expressions of the same logical type: indeed, if we suppose ourselves equipped with the notion of truth-value for sentences of the language, we could use the fact of interchangeability in all contexts without change of truth-value as a criterion for semantic equivalence, even in the absence of any specific semantics. Semantic equivalence will, of course, be an equivalence relation, and hence will partition expressions of any given logical type into equivalence classes. All we now need to do is take these equivalence classes as corresponding uniquely to abstract entities, which may

> then be construed as the referents of the expressions in each equivalence class.
>
> (Dummett, 1981, pp. 401–402)

The deflationary theorist is someone who provides just such a programmatic account of a particular language. Doing that is fine but is incompatible with treating those referents, those equivalence classes, as determined by everyday (or even outré) worldly objects and properties. In order for that to be the case, we need it to be the case that "'the referents of our words are what we speak *about*'" (Dummett, 1981, p. 404). To do that:

> We do not require merely that there be some object which can serve as the referent of a name, that is, which can satisfy the condition that the referent determines the class of semantically equivalent names to which the given name belongs: we require that the object taken to be the referent be the one to which any predicate in whose argument-place the name can stand can meaningfully be applied (truly or falsely); and that, among such objects, that one be taken to be the referent which is such that the resulting sentence is true just in case the predicate is true of it.
>
> (Dummett, 1981, p. 405)

I am claiming that the reason we need a substantial notion of intentionality is so that we can give flesh to a theory of meaning. Without it we are left with a picture of speaker behaviour. It might be a picture we can draw because we could have developed sophisticated linguistic practices without ever noticing that they were about the world. Unless they are about the world it is not a picture we can understand. Understanding that picture requires getting outside of the practice to see why we have drawn the picture in the way that we have. That perspective is not available if all speaking and thinking, including speaking and thinking about speaking and thinking, are pure practical behaviours.

The moral is clear. Minimalist theories of truth are inadequate to account for explicit knowledge of meaning and content. A minimalist truth predicate is adequate to build a theory of meaning or a theory of thought which models behaviour at the ground floor. This is as it should be. Agents who are operating at the ground floor more or less get things right. On a minimalist account, getting things right is always in terms of hypothetical reasons. However, agents need have no concept of getting things right. They merely need to be able to respond to reasons, and thus get things right when things

go well. However, agents operating at the first level have explicit knowledge of meaning and content. They are able to evaluate their own and other people's performances. Evaluating performances, on these views, is a matter of recognising the hypothetical reasons that agents have for those performances. As the reasons are hypothetical, what counts as a reason depends on the agent's projects. So, explicit evaluation requires explicit attribution of projects to agents and an explicit understanding of how things are in the world. That requires grasping the concepts involved in attributing reasons to performers. But, doing that, at the very least, requires seeing how thoughts or sentences relate to the world. That is, appealing to a vertical dimension of concept use or the use of sub-sentential expressions. The problem with minimalist theories of truth is that, by denying any substantial notion of intentionality and correctness, they fail to make sense of how thinkers can recognise a vertical dimension of concept use. So, they preclude themselves from any account of explicit knowledge of meaning and content.

§4 Inflating Truth and Deflating Correctness

By deflating normativity and intentionality, the minimalist is left with no account as to how it is that she has explicit knowledge of the content of her propositional attitudes or the meaning of her sentences. In particular, she wants to claim that all linguistic understanding is a matter of being able to use words in accordance with some regularity of use, and all other understanding a matter of being disposed to move in and out of, and between mental states. However, those mental states are fully characterised as a dispositional state, so understanding does not require awareness of how the world strikes you. But, to claim to characterise even the horizontal connections between states requires being able to adopt a third personal perspective on your own dispositional setup. That requires some account of how you ever came to recognise that you were thinking about how things are, and, indeed, some account of what it is to recognise of the belief that p, which is fully characterised in terms of it horizontal connections, is, when things go well, a response to the fact that p. In other words, the theorist need some account of how she came to realise that her belief that p was, in

some minimal sense, correct if and only if p. However, by precluding herself from there being anything that accounts for intentionality, the theorist precludes herself from making sense of how she came to see that the interpretation of her thoughts and sentences given by a theory of thought or a theory of meaning was so much as an interpretation. What the minimalist ends up with is a picture on which everything is mere behaviour. The problem was that by deflating both intentionality and correctness the theorist is unable to make sense of our own ability to model ground floor behaviour.

I am now going to turn to views that deflate correctness, but treat truth as a substantial property. In particular those that treat truth as a relation between a sentence and a truth maker and those that treat it as a relation between a thought and a truth maker (designation views). The idea is that words or concepts are such that they stand in relations to worldly referents. If such a view could be made to work, then the meaning/concept fact associated with each word/concept could provide a descriptive standard that would allow for norm relativity without prescriptive rules. What I am going to do is show that the explicit knowledge constraint rules out these sorts of views.

4.1 Inflation of Semantic Vocabulary

Hattiangadi is someone who has defended such a view. I am going to start with a discussion of her views in order to bring out the problem. There is this much that can be said in Hattiangadi's favour, she has no pretensions to deflate truth or meaning. Hattiangadi is comfortable with the idea of substantial meaning facts. In fact she thinks that they are simply the sort of thing we cannot do without. As she writes:

> Moreover, the sceptical solution fails to supply a suitable surrogate conception of meaning, since the notion of communal agreement presupposes representations with determinate content. Without assuming semantic realism at the outset, the semantic non-factualist cannot legitimate meaning ascriptions to sentences that comprise the conclusion of his argument, and the sentences leading up to it; he cannot claim that his sentences are true even in the weakest, deflationary sense. It turns out that the non-factualist conclusion of the sceptical argument is irremediably self-defeating.
>
> (Hattiangadi, 2007, pp. 210–211)

Hattiangadi acknowledges that she has no theory as to what constitutes the meaning of a word, nevertheless she thinks it is self contradictory to deny there is a fact

of the matter about the meaning of a word. The problem, as she honestly acknowledges, is to give an account of representation (Hattiangadi, 2007, p. 211). But, she argues whatever account of representation is correct it will not need to meet any action guiding constraint. She thinks that "if meaning is normative, then semantic facts would have to be both objective and inherently action-guiding" (Hattiangadi, 2007, p. 209). She also thinks that nothing could be both objective and inherently action guiding, so drops the claim that meaning is normative. What I hope to show in this section is that there is no account of representation as designation that does not treat meaning as objective and inherently action guiding. In chapter 4 I will show that there is no problem with something being objective and inherently action guiding.

Hattiangadi thinks that there is a fact about the meaning of a word and a fact about the content of a concept, and, unlike Horwich, these facts are more than whatever explains a regularity of performance. Grasp of these facts would be sufficient to account for our ability to explicitly understand claims like R1. However, Hattiangadi claims ignorance of the sort of thing that might constitute a meaning fact. However, she thinks that this is a form of scepticism which we can live with:

> However, although we do not now know of a fact that will decide between the hypothesis that I mean snow by ‘snow’ and the hypothesis that I mean schmow [a hypothetical variant word whose application conditions coincide with all of my actual uses of 'snow' but which differ for some potential uses of 'snow'] it does not follow that there can be no fact of the matter what I mean. The sceptic places no restrictions on the sorts of fact we are entitled to consider —he allows even that the fact that I mean something by a word is one accessible only to an omniscient God. Hence, the fact that constitutes what I mean might well be one of which we are not now aware. The sceptic is not justified in concluding that there is no fact of the matter simply because we do not know of one.
>
> (Hattiangadi, 2007, p. 210)

The problem, as I showed in the previous section, is that for one to have explicit knowledge of meaning more is required than the bare existence of a meaning fact. Meaning facts need to be such that they determine substantial semantic values, and in grasping a meaning fact one needs to thereby know what semantic value is determined by it. But, if we do not have any knowledge of meaning facts, how can we know what substantial semantic values they determine? However, this is not a problem for

Hattiangadi. She can claim that the sort of meaning facts of which we are ignorant are facts in a reductive class. In other words, the things of which we are ignorant are the sort of things that determine why a word has one meaning rather than another. But, claims like, '"snow" means snow' are, unlike on Horwich's view, substantial claims. They convey information about the semantic value of the named expression. Reflective speakers of English are able to grasp such claims, but because they do not help us understand what it is for a word to have a meaning, they do not do anything for the philosophical project of accounting for meaning. Hattiangadi is puzzled as to what it is that makes a word meaningful. She does not deny that there are substantial semantic relations, and thus does not face the same problem as Horwich and other minimalists.

4.2 Representation

Human languages have the power to represent an infinite number of situations. Reflective speakers of a human language have the ability to explicitly understand an infinite number of those representations. Human beings do not have the ability to remember an infinite list of pairs. This precludes linguistic representation being a matter of the pairing up of the declarative sentences with situations. Instead, language works by being compositional. Competent human speakers grasp the meaning of a finite stock of semantic primitives. They also grasp the significance of combining those primitives in particular ways. A competent speaker understands the result of combining the semantic primitives in a syntactically correct manner into a sentence. So far, so uncontroversial. Competent speakers understand the meaning of sentences because they understand the meanings of their parts and the significance of the way they are put together. In addition, if something has content, then, as I have already shown, it has truth conditions. So, as Hattiangadi thinks that sentences have contents, she has to think they have truth conditions[69]. It follows that, at the very least, somebody who grasps the meaning of the sentence needs to be in a position to work out the truth conditions of that sentence. The question is: how can meaning be such that competent speakers are in a position such that they can work out the truth conditions of any arbitrary sentence?

69 This is what Hattiangadi does in fact think (Hattiangadi, 2007, p. 12).

4.3 Correspondence as Congruence

The traditional answer to this question appeals to congruence. The idea is that each categorematic part of a sentence has a meaning such that it picks out some worldly item. Speakers who grasp the meaning of the words out of which the sentence is composed are in a position to locate the worldly counterpart of each categorematic part. They also understand the significance of putting those parts together. For example, the meaning of "Stravinsky" is such that it refers to Stravinsky, the meaning of "composed" is such that it stands for the two placed relation of composition, and "the Rite of Spring" such that it refers to The Rite of Spring. But, this brings in the problem of the unity of the proposition. There is a significant difference between "Stravinsky composed the Rite of Spring" and "Stravinsky, the relation of composition, The Rite of Spring". The former is a sentence, and the latter is a list. They both have unity, but only the former can make a claim[70]. Another way of putting the point is by saying that sentences have a completeness which lists lack. According to the congruence theorist the answer is that in a sentence, the relation relates, and this will be mirrored in the reference of that sentence. This is not the case in a list. It becomes a brute fact about some entities that they have the completeness characteristic of a claim, and, when we have something with that completeness, we have a sentence whose reference is a fact. Competent speakers are able to exploit the fact that the reference of a sentence is a fact to use sentences for whatever purpose they, the competent speakers, see fit. They can use the sentence to deny that there is such a fact, to assert that there is such a fact, to lie about the existence of such a fact, to ask about it, etc.

However, there is a problem with false sentences. Take the sentence "Berlioz composed The Rite of Spring", this is as complete as our exemplar sentence, and makes just as much of a claim. It is however false. The problem is that the explanation of the completeness of a sentence was that when we have a sentence the relation relates the other items in the sentence into a unity, and this is mirrored in the reference. But, false sentences are just as meaningful as true sentences. So, in false sentences the relation relates, and this is mirrored in their reference. The reference of "Berlioz composed The

70 I first spotted this point in Richard Gaskin (Gaskin, 2008, p. 2). Leonard Linsky also makes the same point (Linsky, 1992, p. 243). Linsky attributes the distinction to Russell and the distinction between a proposition and a class as many (Russell, 1992, §70).

Rite of Spring" is the fact that Berlioz composed The Rite of Spring. This means that we have to acknowledge that there is no difference in kind between true facts and false facts. All of which sounds a bit silly.

That is not yet an objection. The silliness can be somewhat diffused if I change the jargon and talk about states affairs. There is no difference in kind between true states of affairs and false states of affairs. However, the real problem is that we cannot distinguish the true states of affairs from the false states of affairs. Each meaningful sentence has a reference. The references of sentences, true and false, make up a single unified class of state of affairs. Russell tried to hold this position for a while, and expresses it as follows:

> It may be said – and this is, I believe, the correct view – that there is no problem at all in truth and falsehood; that some propositions are true and some false, just as some roses are red and some white; that belief is a certain attitude towards propositions, which is called knowledge when they are true, error when they are false.
>
> (Russell, 1904, p. 523)

But, if the difference between the true facts and false fact is as trivial as the fact that there is a difference between a red rose and white rose, a preference for true facts is "an unaccountable prejudice" (Russell, 1904, p. 523). Russell thinks he can live with this prejudice, but in fact he cannot[71]. We can distinguish red roses from white roses, and so can prefer one or other type of rose. But, if the meaning of a sentence is a fact, we cannot distinguish true facts and false facts. They are all on a par. In building a theory of meaning for a language the theorist appeals to an understanding of assertion as presenting as true. She lays claim to an understanding of the difference between truth and falsity, and this is an impossibility on Russell's short lived view. The fact that we can have explicit knowledge of what it is to assert shows that meaning and truth are not both mere congruence with a fact.

4.4 Correspondence as Correlation

The more modern option, which is due to Richard Kirkham's reading of JL Austin (Kirkham, 1995, p. 124), is to eschew any congruence between sentence and

71 Like so many of Russell's views, this one was short lived. He was on the verge of giving it up in 1906 (see Russell 1906, §III).

truth maker. Words are meaningful in such a way that when they are combined together into a sentence they form a sentence which is also meaningful. That sentence is true when it corresponds to a fact, and false otherwise. But, correspondence is not a matter of congruence with a truth maker, it is merely a matter of lining up sentences with facts. However, competent speakers are in a position to do that lining up for any sentence that they understand. Reflective speakers have explicit knowledge of those correlations. As a result, the explicit knowledge required is knowledge of these correlations.

It looks like there might be a simple solution. Given that we are competent speakers, we know that "Stravinsky composed the Rite of Spring" means that Stravinsky composed the Rite of Spring, and that "I am happy here and now" means that the purported speaker is happy at the purported time and location of utterance. Competent speakers are then in a position to appeal to the disquotational nature of the truth predicate to specify the truth conditions. All that they have to do is substitute their statement of meaning into the so-called equivalence schema:

ES. S is true if and only if p

> where S is the name of a sentence and p is a sentence in use which can also be used to give the meaning of S

So, "Stravinsky composed the Rite of Spring" is true if and only if Stravinsky composed the Rite of Spring, and "I am happy here and now" is true if and only if the purported speaker is happy at the purported time and location of utterance.

However, although this method will allow a competent speaker to give a statement of the truth conditions of any sentence, it cannot be a statement of her explicit knowledge of the truth conditions of a sentence. For any given sentence, she needs to know which fact it would be correlated with if it were true. The reason she needs to know this is this is because, amongst other things, she knows what it is to present the sentence as true. If the sentence is true because it is in fact correlated with some fact in the world, then to present it as true is to present it as being so correlated. That is, she needs to know which fact it would be correlated with if it were true. But, all that the equivalence schema gives us, on this view, is a way of naming the fact in question. In general, there is something arbitrary about the relation between a name and its bearer. To learn the use of a name one needs to learn to pair up an object in the world with that name. But, there are far too many possible facts for a competent speaker to learn which

fact is correlated with which sentence by learning a whole list of pairings. Instead, if a true sentence does indeed designate a fact, she needs to understand how the meaning of the sentence determines which fact it would designate if it were true. But, until we have an account of how it is that a sentences in use name facts, we are not in a position to know which fact an arbitrary sentence would be correlated with were it to be true. It is as if when asked who invented the zip, someone replies, "Julius". When asked as to the identity of Julius, they reply, "the person who invented the zip". Assuming that some unique person did invent the zip, the answer to the question is true, but it does not provide any information.

Among the things that a speaker who has explicit knowledge of the content of a sentence knows is the truth conditions of that sentence. The fact that correlation theories have the resources to specify the truth conditions for any given sentence does not show that the correlation theory has the resources to make sense of the explicit knowledge of competent speakers. What a correlation theory can do is show that if we can find a statement of the meaning of a sentence, we can use that statement to produce a statement of the truth conditions of that sentence. However, to explain our explicit knowledge of what it is to use a sentence with a variety of forces, we need to show how it is that a competent speaker is able to know the truth conditions of sentences. Finding a way of specifying the output of that knowledge does not account for that competence.

In effect, the correspondence theorist faces a dilemma: if she allows that the meaning of a sentence is its truth conditions, then specifying the truth conditions does in fact account for her knowledge of meaning. However, she is then unable to account for the difference between a true sentence and a false sentence. If she wishes to account for the difference between a true sentence and a false sentence by appeal to whether or not the truth conditions obtain, specification of the truth conditions of a sentence does not account for her explicit knowledge of meaning. Because, on this view, the truth conditions of a sentence are its being correlated with a truth maker, specifying the meaning of a sentence does not explain why it has truth conditions at all. And even if it is taken as an article of faith that true sentences correspond to truth makers, the specification of a potential truth maker, T, of a sentence, S, does not explain why something that means what S does should be correlated with T when S is true. In other words, the correlation theorist has no account of her explicit knowledge.

4.5 The Mental

The mental sphere has parallel problems. If the content of a belief is taken to be an item in the world, then we have the immediate parallel problem to the problem of false facts. To put it another way, if belief is taken to be a two place relation between a thinker and a fact, then false beliefs have facts for objects, and we can make no sense of what makes a true belief different from a false belief.

But, it might be objected, that a belief is a relation between a thinker and a fact, however true beliefs and false beliefs are all relations to facts which are actual. For example, the belief that Donald Bradman has a higher batting average than Wally Hammond is related to the same fact as the belief that Donald Bradman does not have a higher batting average than Wally Hammond, namely the fact that Donald Bradman has the higher average. This makes the former belief true and the latter belief false. The thought would be that there is a distinction between the object and the content of a belief. The object of a belief is the fact to which it is related, and the content it is what determines that object. The two beliefs in question have the same object, namely the fact that Donald Bradman has a higher batting average than Wally Hammond, but a different content. In the former belief, the content is that Donald Bradman has the higher average, and in the latter that Wally Hammond scored more runs per innings. Bertrand Russell tried out this view for a while:

> You may believe the proposition "to-day is Tuesday" both when, in fact, to-day is Tuesday, and when to-day is not Tuesday. If today is not Tuesday, this fact is the objective of your belief that to-day is Tuesday. But obviously the relation of your belief to the fact is different in this case from what it is in the case when to-day is Tuesday. We may say, metaphorically, that when to-day is Tuesday, your belief that it is Tuesday points TOWARDS the fact, whereas when to-day is not Tuesday your belief points AWAY FROM the fact. Thus the objective reference of a belief is not determined by the fact alone, but by the direction of the belief towards or away from the fact.
>
> Russell, 1921, Chapter XIII

However, making this modification robs some of the simplicity from the original theory. There is no longer an account of why each belief has the object that it does. Remember, a theorist of thought is trying to account for the explicit knowledge of the

truth conditions. On this view, the truth conditions of the belief are the fact that makes the belief true or false. In my example, it is the fact that Donald Bradman has a higher batting average than Wally Hammond which makes the belief that Donald Bradman has the higher average true and makes the belief that Wally Hammond scored more runs per innings false. This is the mental analogue of a correlation view. And, as in the correlation case with language, it is not enough merely to specify the truth conditions of each thought, we need an account of why they are the truth conditions. Indeed, the position is in an even worse state than the correlation theory because truth is no longer a device of denominalisation. The phrase used to give the content of a belief is not a structural descriptive name of the fact, and so we cannot use truth to denominalise it and state the fact it names. It may be that the object of every belief is a fact, and that there are no false facts, but that does not explain why each belief has the object that it does.

The truth maker of the belief is determined by the content of that belief, and the content determined by which concepts are involved in the belief. So, it is to conceptual content that the theorist will turn. However, propositional content is not well defined. There are a variety of approaches. The way to think about them is in terms of different analyses of propositional attitude ascriptions. To keep things simple consider:

B1: Adriana believes that today is Tuesday

One way of analysing B1 is to treat "today is Tuesday" as a description of a fact and "that today is Tuesday" as the name of a thought. This then uses the description, "today is Tuesday" as part of a structural-descriptive name which attributes to Adriana the mental state that points "to the fact 'to-day is Tuesday' if that is a fact, or away from the fact 'to-day is not Tuesday' if that is a fact" (Russell, 1921, chapter XIII). As a result, the phrase, "that today is Tuesday" is not only the name of a thought, but the name of a possible fact.

Now, both "thought" and "fact" are terms of art. There is no theory-independent way of deciding on the identity conditions for either thoughts or facts. Instead, the theorist who wants to make play with such entities needs to provide a theory about what constitutes a thought or a fact and then convince us that this is the right way of thinking about the world. I have claimed that two thoughts are distinct if and only if they they have a different mental role. But, if distinct thoughts have different mental roles, they have different systematic effects on the activity of thinking. Which is to say, that, even

when two distinct thoughts are true in all the same situations, a thinker can adopt an attitude with one of those thoughts as its content that she does not adopt to the other. In effect, this is to appeal to the Fregean 'intuitive criterion of difference' (Evans, 1982, p. 18). Two thoughts are distinct if and only if they are differently informative. I am going to focus for the moment on facts. One way of thinking about facts is to treat them as datable events. That is, as locatable happenings in space-time. However, on this view, because two thoughts can have a different mental role while being about the same fact, thoughts are much more fine grained than facts, Here is Frank Ramsey presenting the problem, Ramsey uses "event" rather than "fact" in his presentation. This does not affect the argument as, for the moment, facts are under discussion as datable events:

> The truth is that a phrase like "the death of Caesar" can be used in two different ways; ordinarily, we use it as the description of an event, and we could say that "the death of Caesar" and "the murder of Caesar " were two different descriptions of the same event. But we can also use "the death of Caesar" in a context like "he was aware of the death of Caesar" meaning "he was aware that Caesar had died"; here (and this is the sort of case which occurs in the discussion of cognition) we cannot regard "the death of Caesar " as the description of an event; if it were, the whole proposition would be, "There is an event E of a certain sort, such that he is aware of E," and would be still true if we substituted another description of the same event, e.g., "the murder of Caesar." That is, if his awareness has for its object an event described by "the death of Caesar," then, if he is aware of the death of Caesar, he must also be aware of the murder of Caesar, for they are identical. But, in fact, he could quite well be aware that Caesar had died, without knowing that he had been murdered, so that his awareness must have for its object not merely an event but an event and a character also.
>
> (Ramsey, 1927, p. 156)

The problem which Ramsey has identified is that, outside of the context of propositional attitude ascriptions, there is no problem with the inter-substitution of co-referring singular terms. This is not the case in ascriptions of propositional attitudes. As a result, sentences cannot straightforwardly be part of structural-descriptive names of thoughts because they do not designate thoughts[72]. The problem is not just with treating facts as datable events. It is a problem with any view of facts that treats facts as more fine grained than the sentences we use to talk about them. Just so long as fact identity is determined by the extensions of the words used in the sentence with which we describe

72 I take it that this Alonzo Church's version of the so-called "slingshot argument" provides a formalisation of this objection (Church 1943, 299-301).

the relevant fact Ramsey's problem will reappear. It will always be possible to find two sentences which are about the same fact but which are differently informative. So, on this analysis of B1, there is no account of which fact a thought corresponds with. In other words, on this analysis of B1, there is no account of the content of thoughts.

Alternatively, one might try to bite the bullet and maintain that sentences do designate possible facts, and that *any* difference in the informativeness of a sentence makes a difference to which fact it designates. Such a view understands the sentence, "today is Tuesday" as claiming that there is some fact, x, and x is the fact that today is Tuesday. It designates a different fact from the sentence, "yesterday was Monday". Doing this allows us to keep our semantic innocence whilst maintaining that propositional attitude contexts are fine grained. It would be possible to believe that today is Tuesday without believing that yesterday was Monday because one did not realise that the fact picked out by your belief is such that, if it obtains, so does the fact picked out by the belief that yesterday was Monday. John Searle has developed just such a view (Searle, 1995, pp. 211–212).

However, this undermines the explanatory power of the theory. It is another version of the correlation theory. To see this consider, that on this view facts are so fine-grained that the only way to specify a fact is by using a sentence to form a transparent name of a belief and saying that it is the fact correlated with that belief, i.e. "the fact correlated with the belief that today is Tuesday". The theory provides no way of specifying a fact other than by specifying the content of a belief. So, like the correlation theorist, Searle needs to provide an account of why each belief would designate the fact that it does[73]. One way to go about this would be to develop a redundancy theory of truth for beliefs. I will turn to this sort of view in the next chapter. Before then, I am going to look at another way that Russell tried to defend a version of the correspondence theory. This is the multiple relation theory of judgement.

4.6 Multiple Relation Theories of Judgement

The *locus classicus* for a multiple relation theory of judgement is Bertrand

73 It is also not obvious that the theory avoids all versions of the slingshot. Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra has provided a version aimed against Searle's correspondence theory (Rodriguez-Pereyra, 1998).

Russell. He starts to develop it in "On the Nature of Truth" (Russell, 1906, pp. 44–49) and presents a version in his 1913 "The Problems of Philosophy" (Russell, 2001, pp. 72–75). The idea is that instead of treating a belief as a relation between a thinker and a proposition, or between a thinker and a fact, a belief is treated as a multiple relation between a thinker, objects, properties and relations. The act of judgement unifies these disparate entities into a single complex whole. That belief is true when the complex whole created by the act of judgement corresponds to a fact. It is false otherwise. For example, Clare's belief that tomatoes taste good with salt is a complex whole formed by Clare's judgement that tomatoes taste good with salt. That judgement unifies the concept *tomatoes* with the concept *tasting good with salt*. The belief is then analysed as a three placed relation between Clare, the concept *tomatoes* and the concept *tasting good with salt*[74]. If the judgement is true, then there is a fact that tomatoes taste good with salt, and that means that there is a four placed relation between Clare, the concept *tomatoes*, the concept *tasting good with salt*, and the fact that tomatoes taste good with salt.

However, the theory also faces the problem of accounting for the possibility of explicit knowledge of content. The basic question is why should the complex whole which is that the three placed relation between Clare, the concept *tomatoes* and the concept *tasting good with salt* stand in a relation to the fact that tomatoes taste good with salt? The problem is that complex wholes are just one more object in the world, albeit a complex object. Their standing in relation to other complex wholes, facts, is yet another complex object in the world. As a result, the link between making a judgement and believing that something is true is severed. A belief, on this view, is a relation between a believer and a series of entities. A belief is true when the complex whole formed by an act of judgement corresponds to some relation of objects in the world. It is false otherwise.

However, because truth is analysed as a relation between two complex wholes, the truth of a belief is itself another entity. So, on this view, the belief that a belief is true is the result of a different judgement from the belief itself. When Clare believes that her belief about tomatoes is true, she is not only part of a three placed relation between herself, the concept *tomatoes*, and the concept *tasting nice with salt*, she is also part of a relation which relates herself, the three placed relation just mentioned, and the fact that

74 I am here using italics to name concepts. In general I prefer to use a locution like, "the concept of tomatoes" to turn that trick. However, it is a bit cumbersome here.

tomatoes taste nice with salt. This brings with it the problem of false facts in a new form. Consider what happens when Clare has a false belief about one of her own beliefs, for example her belief, on a cold day, that the weather is warm. Clare's belief in the truth of her belief that the weather is warm is a three placed relation formed by an act of judgement. The relata are:

(d) Clare,

(e) the complex whole *her belief that the weather is warm related by correspondence to the fact that the weather is warm*,

(f) the fact that the complex whole *her belief that the weather is warm* is related by correspondence to the fact that the weather is warm.

But, unless we are prepared to countenance false facts there can be no such complex whole formed by Clare's judgement relating i, ii and iii. This is because there is no fact that the weather is warm, and the fact that the weather is warm forms an essential component in two of the complex wholes, ii and iii, which are part of the belief. That is an intolerable result, but so is acknowledging the existence of false facts. Without there being a difference between true facts and false facts, there is no difference between a true belief and a false belief.

It could perhaps be suggested that where the belief is false the worldly element of the complex is the null set. This would avoid the problem of false facts. However, the position faces further problems. There is nothing, on this theory, to stop Clare from believing that the weather is warm whilst denying that the belief that the weather is warm is true. On this view, there is the complex of a belief, and then a further fact as to whether it stands in relation to a fact or to the null set. To believe that a belief is true is to judge that there is a fact of its relation to a fact. Nothing about the content of a belief requires that a thinker makes that judgement. By making truth a matter of relation between belief and a fact, the position cannot account for the validity of moving from "the belief that p" to "the belief that p is true". It makes the fact of that inference a quirk of our psychology, and makes logic hostage to empirical facts about our mental organisation.

The deep reason for this is that the view precludes the possibility of explicit knowledge of content. It is a view that denies that specifying the truth conditions of a belief captures the content of that belief. This is because, on a multiple relation theory,

the truth conditions of a belief are the obtaining of a relation of correspondence between that belief and a fact. Someone who judges that the belief is true judges that the relation obtains. They make that judgement on the basis of the content of the belief. Their knowledge of the content of the belief must be such that it allows them to know which fact needs to obtain for the belief to be related to the world in such a way that it is true. But, as the truth conditions are a correspondence relation holding between a belief, B, and a particular fact, F, if the content of the belief could by captured by specifying the truth conditions of that belief, then the knowledge that the truth conditions of B are the obtaining of a correspondence relation between B and F would have to determine which fact F was. That looks all right until we consider that in order to know that the truth conditions of B are the obtaining of a correspondence relation between B and F you must already know which fact F is. But you have no way of knowing which fact F is until you know which fact B would be related to if it were true, and no way of knowing which fact B would be related to until you know which fact F is. You are stuck in a circle.

4.7 Frege

The essence of a correspondence view is that intentionality is a matter of designation. A sentence or thought is meant to designate something. This of course immediately raises a problem with falsity. Why should a false sentence designate something? Apart from Russell's earliest view, correspondence theories have all tried to find a way of explaining the difference between true sentences or thoughts and false ones. The natural move is to make sense of meaning or propositional content in such a way that somebody who understands the sentence/grasps the thought knows what item the sentence/thought would designate if it were to be true. However, this pulls apart content and truth conditions in an untenable manner. The theory, may be able to make sense of specifying the truth conditions of each item, but is unable to make sense of why each item should have the truth conditions that it does. The theory can give no insight into why a sentence/thought should be correlated with the specified truth conditions. In this way, specifying the truth conditions does not make sense of explicit knowledge of content.

There is another famous argument to the same effect. It is the slingshot argument. The slingshot starts from two reasonable assumptions:

SA1. Co-referring singular terms are everywhere interchangeable

SA2. Logical equivalents can be substituted for each other.

It then shows that a candidate most one correspondent for all true sentences as follows:

I. Snow is white corresponds to the fact that Snow is white.

II. Snow is white corresponds to the fact that ιx(x = Diogenes) = ιx(x = Diogenes whilst snow is white)[75].

III. Snow is white corresponds to the fact that ιx(x = Diogenes) = ιx(x = Diogenes whilst grass is green).

IV. Snow is white corresponds to the fact that grass is green.

(a) "Snow is white" and (b) "ιx(x = Diogenes) = ιx(x = Diogenes whilst snow is white)" are logical equivalents, as are (c) "ιx(x = Diogenes) = ιx(x = Diogenes whilst grass is green)" and (d) "grass is green". As a result, there should be no problem with substituting (a) with (b) or (c) with (d) to the right of "corresponds to the fact that". However, (e) "ιx(x = Diogenes whilst snow is white)" and (f) "ιx(x = Diogenes whilst grass is green)" are co-referring singular terms and so (e) and (f) should also be interchangeable to the right of "corresponds to the fact that". Of course, the only important feature of (a) "snow is white" and (b) "grass is green" is that they are both true. Any two truths would have done.

Although, I think the slingshot is a powerful argument, and successful against correlation theories. There are ways of blocking it. In particular, one can deny that definite descriptions are singular terms and so resist the move from II to III. However, the argument I have offered is more general than slingshot. The slingshot purports to show that if sentences designate something, then there are most two things and at least two things for a sentence to designate. These two things are then plausibly taken to be the True and the False. This is exactly the moral Frege draws from problems of substitution in "on Sense and Reference"[76]. He writes:

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75 "ιx(x = Diogenes)" should be read as "the unique x such that x is Diogenes"

76 This was not Frege's view in "The Foundations of Arithmetic" (Frege, 1980) or in "The Thought" (Frege, 1956). at the beginning of Frege's career and at the end, he recognises the unique nature of sentences. He understands that the semantic value of an expression must be its contribution to the truth values of sentences in which it can occur.

> Let us assume for the time being that the sentence has a reference! If we now replace one word of the sentence by another having the same referent, but a different sense, this can have no influence upon the referent of the sentence. Yet we can see that in such a case the thought changes; since, e.g., the thought of the sentence "The morning star is a body illuminated by the sun" differs from that of the sentence "The evening star is a body illuminated by the sun." Anybody who did not know that the evening star is the morning star might hold the one thought to be true, the other false. The thought, accordingly, cannot be the referent of the sentence, but must rather be considered as the sense.
>
> (Frege, 1948, p. 33)

and then, after pointing out that in judgement we recognise the thought to be true or false, as the case may be, he writes:

> We are therefore driven into accepting the truth value of a sentence as its referent. By the truth value of sentence I understand the circumstance that it is true or false. There are no further truth values. For brevity I call one the true, the other the false. Every declarative sentence concerned with the referents of its words is therefore to be regarded as proper name, and its referent, if it exists, is either the true or the false.
>
> (Frege, 1948, p. 34)

But, the foregoing shows that Frege was wrong to treat a sentence as a proper name for a truth value. Frege faces the same problem as early Russell. Russell initially tried to treat sentences as names of facts. Some sentences named true facts and some sentences named false facts. Russell was unable account for our preference for truth over falsity. Frege faces the same problem. He presents us with two respectable objects. Some sentences name one, and some sentences name the other. He gives us no conception of how it is that we are able to judge that a sentence names the true. He has a slight advantage over Russell. Russell maintained that there was no difference in kind between false facts and true facts. As a result Russell could not make sense of our ability to understand presenting as true. For Frege, there is a difference between the true and the false. So, Frege can maintain that judging a sentence to be true is judging that it refers to the true. But, we are unable to make sense of our ability to understand the truth conditions of sentences, and, thus, Frege still can not make sense of ability to understand presenting sentences as true.

Understanding the content of a sentence gives us an understanding of the truth

conditions of that sentence. But, once truth and falsity are assimilated to objects, the truth conditions of the sentence are its referring to the true. But, now why should something with the content that snow is white refer to the true if and only if snow is white? The answer, for Frege, is that "is white" is a function from objects to the true when the argument place is filled by an object which is, in fact, white. But, we now need an account of what it is to be, in fact, white. This is something we can make sense of when we make sense of predicate "is white" being true of white things, but that requires us to make sense of sentences as *being* true or false. Treating a sentence being true as a matter of it designating the True leaves us unable to use our grip on what it is to be true to make sense of which objects fall under which predicate. The problem is that when the true and the false are just two objects, predicates are functions from objects to one of two objects – the True or the False. We can define a predicate in terms of which objects will, when supplied as argument, yield the True as value. But, there is no more to be said about why an object falls within the extension of a predicate. This results in having to understand what it is to be, in fact, white in terms of membership of the extension of the predicate "is white". But, we now have no way of making sense of which objects are members of the extension of the predicate "is white". The same is going to go for any other predicate. The semantics Frege offers in "on Sense and Reference" may be adequate to build a model of a language. It cannot make sense of our understanding of the language. Truth itself cannot be an object which is the referent of some sentences.

The problem is quite general. We do not gain an understanding of language by treating sentences as designating objects. The same goes for mentality and thoughts. We do not gain an understanding of mentality by treating thoughts as designating objects. So, intentionality cannot be explained as a mapping relation between sentences/thoughts and things in the world. Instead, it has to be intrinsic to a sentence or a thought that it is about the world. Any account of content has to make sense of that.

§5 Summary and the Way Ahead

Using language and thinking are practical activities. They are things that creatures can do. Those practical capacities can be modelled, in part, by building a

bipartite truth conditional theory for each practice. The theory will take the form of specifying the different types of linguistic/mental action in terms of the way the truth value of the sentence/thought used in performing an action affects the performance of that action, and then provide a method of specifying the truth conditions of each sentence/thought. However, the fact that we can build such a theory shows that we have explicit knowledge of meaning/content. Having explicit knowledge of meaning/content requires having explicit knowledge of the way the world provides reasons for our behaviour.

I showed that minimalist views cannot account for our explicit knowledge of meaning/content because they cannot justify the claim that the referents of all words are what we talk about, or justify the claim that the referents of our concepts are what we think about. Appealing to a relation between truth-bearers and truth-makers does not help. It severs the connection between truth and meaning/content. If the meaning of a sentence or the content of a propositional attitude is taken to be a fact, then we cannot distinguish between true facts and false facts, and so have no justification of our ability to produce a theory of force. If, instead, we treat meaning/content facts as distinguishable from truth conditions, we cannot make sense of our ability to grasp truth conditions. We still cannot make sense of our ability to produce a theory of force, because we cannot make sense of our ability to know what it is for something to be true. The upshot is that intentionality has to be an intrinsic property of sentences/thoughts. In the next chapter I am going to look at views that try to make sense of intentionality in this way. The first set of views I will look at are redundancy views of truth. These treat intentionality as an intrinsic property whilst maintaining that it can be explained from a natural scientific perspective. The second set are interpretive theories of truth. These maintain that intentionality can only be understood in terms of what it is for something to be true. It will turn out that neither set of views are able to account for our abilities to theorise about language use and thinking.

Chapter 3, Thought Priority

In chapter 1 I showed that language use and thinking are rational activities. I also showed that building a model of linguistic activity or thinking requires using a truth predicate to build a theory of content and theory of force. I followed McDowell and labelled such a theory, "a bipartite truth conditional theory". In addition I showed that how one thinks about the natures of language and thought determines how one thinks about the rationality of those activities, and also how one understands what has been modelled by such a theory. In chapter 2 I argued that the possibility of explicit knowledge of meaning and thought content shows that there is more to truth than it being a device of semantic or mental ascent, but that lacuna is not filled by treating truth as a relation between truth-bearer and truth-maker. In other words, I showed that minimalism about truth is false, but that its failure does not imply that some version of a designation theory should be adopted.

In this chapter I am going to start my defence of a version of the "linguistic priority thesis". The version I wish to defend is that:

> **LPT**: Truth is, in the first instance, a substantial, evaluative property of sentences.

I am going to claim that thoughts are not properly said to be true or false. Phrased like that, the claim might raise some alarm bells. After all, when Simon believes that Jack went up the Hill, and Jack went up the Hill, then surely what Simon believes is true? I have no objection to calling Simon's belief true, or even saying that what Simon believes is true. However, what I am going to deny is that Simon's belief is the upshot of a correct judgement of the truth value of a thought. What has a truth value is the sentence "Jack went up the Hill". That sentence, in this context, is true. It can also be used to describe Simon's belief. But, not only is Simon's belief not the upshot of a correct judgement of the truth value of a thought, it is also not the upshot of a correct judgement of the truth value of the sentence. It is a correct response to how things are. But, because it is about the way things are, a sentence which describes that states affairs can, in the right context, also describe Simon's belief. This allows for a derivative sense in which it can be said that Simon's belief is true. This is to follow a hint of Davidson's:

> It is often wrongly thought that the semantical concept of truth is redundant, that there is

> no difference between asserting that a sentence *s* is true, and using *s* to make an assertion. What may be right is a redundancy theory of belief, that to believe that *p* is not to be distinguished from the belief that *p* is true.
>
> (Davidson, 2001b, 170)

In effect then, I am going to argue that truth values are semantic values. It is only things that can have a truth value as a semantic value which can be said to bare truth. Having, in the previous chapter, ruled out understanding mental states as designating things in the world, in this chapter, I am going to look at views which treat thoughts as a product of what individual thinkers do. I am going to show that, on such views, the explicit knowledge constraint precludes treating truth as a substantial mental value. The problem turns out to be that we have no way of grasping mental content because we have no way of representing what we do. The problem remains in place whether or not we adopt a redundancy view or an interpretive view of truth. I am also going to show that the explicit knowledge constraint also precludes linguistic priority versions of redundancy theories and interpretive theories of truth. The problem turns out to be that, although we have a way of representing what we do, we have no way of understanding it as a representation. So, in this chapter, I begin to establish the linguistic priority thesis by showing that explicit knowledge of meaning or thought content requires access to the standards that govern behaviour. This will pave the way in the next chapter for showing that truth has to be a substantial value of sentences because it is only in a language that we have access to the rules that govern behaviour.

There are two broad strategies for explaining intentionality which I am going to explore in this chapter. The first is to embrace a redundancy theory of truth. Any view which accounts for the intentionality of utterances or mental states without reference to their truth value is a redundancy theory of truth. As I am using the term, a redundancy view of truth does not deny that there are substantial truth values. It denies the explanatory value of truth. The redundancy theorist uses her explanation of intentionality to account for truth, and not the other way round. In other words, she will try to give a causal-cum-functional account of content. The second way is to treat truth as an explanatorily basic property; precisely the property which explains intentionality. This is an interpretive view of truth. Although self-respecting contemporary theorists will treat utterances and actual mental states as having causes, they do not need to appeal to these causes in order to make sense of content. What matters is that there is a

presenting of the world by assertoric utterance and the taking of the world in a believing. When there is such a thing, it is possible to evaluate the event in terms of its truth value.

The picture that has emerged is this. To deflate normativity whilst avoiding the twin pitfalls of minimalism and designation views, one has to have an account of intentionality as an intrinsic property of sentences and thoughts. One might adopt a redundancy theory, and attempt a natural scientific account of the way that thoughts or sentences are about the world. This role requires some naturalist account of proper functioning. Alternatively, you might treat intentionality as the sui generis property of thoughts or sentences, and maintain that truth is the property which we used to make sense of such a sui generis property. In the remainder of this chapter I will show that none of these options are going to work. The basic problem is not that one cannot capture content in these ways, but rather that without the truth predicate of a theory of meaning/theory of thought being a substantial, evaluative predicate, there would be no possibility of explicit knowledge of content. Thus, there would be no capturing content in those ways. I will start with views that prioritise the mental, and show that neither view of truth will allow for the possibility of explicit knowledge. The basic problem turns out to be that thoughts are not representational, but it is impossible to have access to the content of a thought unless one can represent it. I argue that it is only in language that we can represent the content of a thought. However, making sense of the representational nature of language requires truth to be a semantic property. I then turn my attention to views that treat truth as a linguistic property. I show that, by deflating normativity, both the interpretive theorist and the redundancy theorist make the meaning of an utterance a substantial empirical question, and, as a result, cannot make sense of our explicit knowledge of meaning.

§1 Mentality and Truth

In this section I am going to turn my attention to thinking. An account of the mental is an attempt to make sense of what a thinker does when it thinks. One aspect of that is a theory of thought. That theory aims to capture what a thinker can think by describing the systematic differences made by the concepts a thinker possesses to the

mental life of the thinker. In other words, it is a description of the conceptual capacities of a thinker. The other aspect of such an account is an account of what it is for the mental states of that thinker to be about ways for things to be. This gloss attempts to make sense of the description of what a thinker does as a description of the capacities to recognise and respond to the world. In order to do that she needs to be able to make sense of an assignment of truth conditions to thoughts. I am going to argue that there is no way that she can do that without first coming to grips with the representational medium that is a language. The basic thought is that in order to assign truth conditions to thoughts the theorist needs to be able to be able to decompose thoughts into their component concepts. But, the raw data are acts of thinking. Acts of thinking are not composed out of concepts. As a result, what the theorist has access to are properties of her and other creatures minds. She can judge those propositional attitudes to be correct or incorrect, but those judgements are implicit judgements and do not, even implicitly, reveal how acts of thinking are about the world.

1.1 Two types of thought priority theory

The thought priority theorist, for my purposes, is somebody who takes our explicit knowledge of mental content to explain our explicit knowledge of meaning. I have argued that explicit knowledge of mental content requires knowing the grounds and consequences of particular propositional attitudes. I have also argued that such knowledge involves two parts: knowledge of the way truth values are assigned to thoughts, and the way the truth value of a thought affects what it is to adopt different types of propositional attitude to that thought. So, if explicit access to thought content comes before explicit access to meaning, the theorist needs to vindicate treating truth primarily as a property of something mental.

As I have already shown, thought priority theorists divide into three camps. There are functional views, concept fact views and rational practice views. In the previous chapter, I showed that functional views which denied any substantial notion of intentionality were incompatible with the possibility of explicit knowledge. I also showed that concept fact views which treated intentionality as a matter of a relation of designation between thoughts and things in the world were incapable of accounting for

explicit knowledge. In this chapter, I am going to focus on functional organisation views of thinking, although there will be a brief mention of Frege's late concept fact view (1956). Functional organisation views subdivide into two camps. I am going to call the first type of theories "redundancy" theories of thought, because they treat intentionality to be explicable without reference to truth. The second type I will call "sui generis" theories of thought. These views deny that intentionality can be understood except in terms of truth. In other words, intentionality has to be understood on its own terms. The idea is that intentionality and mindedness have to be understood on their own terms. Their own terms are reasons and rationality.

Of course, everybody has to think that thinking is a matter of responding to reasons, and this might make it seem like it immediately rules out the redundancy camp. This would not be right. Having a mentality is a matter of having an evaluative worldview. That is, it is a matter of wanting certain outcomes and having a stable conception of how things are. But, wanting a particular outcome is sufficient for means-end rationality. If the rat wants cheese, and there is cheese to the left, the rat should go left. That "should" is a hypothetical should. If the rat needs to eat, and there is food in the area, then the rat should go out looking for food. However, it will only do that if it thinks that there is food to be found. As there is food to be found, it should think that. Again, this is hypothetical rationality. It is plausible to think that the reasons a creature responds to in thought are hypothetical reasons. But, as Hattiangadi points out, hypothetical reasons do not impose a normative constraint on action (Hattiangadi, 2006, p. 228). They are just another way of saying, "this is a good/successful/the only way of achieving that". In this case the actions are forming beliefs and desires and acting on them.

In other words, the redundancy theorist can claim that the difference between agency and mechanical response stems from autonomy. Just so long as we can make sense of a creature setting its own goals, then features of the world will be hypothetical reasons for particular courses of action on the part of the agent. In other words, once a creature has projects, there are things that it should do. Reasons, on this view, do not function as motivators. Instead they provide standards for hypothetical evaluation. On a redundancy view, situations are causal inputs which bring about differential responses according to the particular functional organisation of the agent in question. But if that

functional organisation can be understood as giving rise to a particular set of projects, then, given those projects, the situations which are possible causal inputs also serve as standards of evaluation for the creature's behaviour.

1.2 Redundancy Theories of Thought

I am not sure we can make sense of the requisite notion of autonomy, but given that we can, it is possible to hold a redundancy view of the mind. Such a view types mental states according to their functional role. Simplifying things massively, the rat believes that there is cheese in front of it because the mental state caused by the cheese causes the rat to eat the cheese. The rat desires cheese because it is in a mental state which causes it to go out looking for cheese. On this view, all that is required for a creature to have mental states is for it to be able to respond to hypothetical reasons. However, this does impose a further constraint on the creature. If a creature is responding to hypothetical reasons, then the functional organisation of its mind will display a minimal rationality. But, displaying a minimal rationality does not require being aware of any 'demand of rationality' or trying to conform to norms, or of those norms providing a standard of evaluation. Instead, it is a criterion on responding to hypothetical reasons that a creature behaves more or less rationally. The rat does not need to infer p from q just because q follows from p, it is enough that the rat tends to do so when the inference goes through. This can be cashed out in terms of counterfactual relations between mental states. The thought is that if the rat were to be in the state of believing that p, it would tend, in situations in which whether q becomes an issue, to move into the state of believing that q. As Brian Loar puts it:

> How can contingent facts about a physical system amount to rationality, whose ingredients are far from contingent? It is a priori that if certain states are to be counted as beliefs and desires they must satisfy the constraints of rationality. But that they do satisfy them can be as contingent as you like; if they fail to do so they are not beliefs and desires. It is a fallacy to argue that, since rationality has constitutive force, a physical system would have to conform to rationality non-contingently for its workings to constitute the workings of a mind.
>
> (Loar, 1981, pp. 23–24)

This sort of view requires a redundancy theory of truth. A theory of thought is a

description of the way an agent tends to think. But, on a redundancy view, it does no more than capture the dispositions of an agent. As a result, a theory of thought is taken to be a set of descriptive generalisations which explain and predict the way a particular agent tends to think. A theory of thought describes the kind of transitions a particular agent tends to make. As I showed in the last chapter, such a theory works by assigning mental roles to thoughts and concepts. Assigning mental roles is meant to explain and predict the transitions between the mental states of a particular thinker. That is, it describes the horizontal connections between different mental states. If it is also to explain vertical connections, then the theorist need some handle from outside of an account of behaviour on why there are these vertical connections. If she can do this, she will be able to understand the description of the horizontal connections captured in a theory of thought as also assigning the kind of vertical connections that a particular functional setup tends to have.

I am going to show that a redundancy theory which denies LPT cannot meet the explicit knowledge constraint. The very simple thought, to be fleshed out in the following paragraphs, is that, as reasons are not motivational, there is no way to move from mere causal response to the position of rational evaluation. Or, to be more careful, the view does not provide the tools to move from mere causal response to rational evaluation. The thought is that without an evaluative property of truth, the only way for a redundancy view to be true is for it to be unknowable.

1.3 Theories of Thought and Redundancy Theories

There are a variety of redundancy theories of mind. However, what they all have in common is that they treat a mental state as being a matter of the functional role of that state. In addition, if they are to be at all plausible, they need to be such that they are compatible with our ability to build and understand a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought. However, because they are committed to treating mental states as individuated by the functional role of that state, a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought is a description of an idealised mind. These redundancy views are the mental analogue of Paul Horwich's use theory of meaning. A bipartite truth conditional theory

of thought is a description of what a thinker tends to do. There is no sense in which a thinker ought to conform to such a theory. However, a creature that does not more or less conform to the theory cannot be said to be thinking at all[77]. Brian Loar is somebody who has developed just such a redundancy view[78].

In this sense, the surface grammar of the theory of thought is taken to be misleading. Theories of thought look like they treat mental states as relations to thoughts, where thoughts are ideal entities to which competent thinkers adopt a variety of attitudes. But, this view is incompatible with a redundancy theory of mind. According to a redundancy view, being in the state of, for example, believing that the pub is open is to be disposed to behave in a very particular way. Crudely put, it is to be such that if you were to want a drink out with friends, you would go to the pub. It is incompatible with checking to see if the pub is open. It requires you to believe that it is later than a particular time. I take it that these are all necessary but not sufficient (not even jointly sufficient) conditions of being in the state of believing that the pub is open.

The next question is: how can the redundancy theorist understand a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought? The first problem that the redundancy theorist faces is to distinguish between different types of mental states. Like everybody else she needs to have something to say about how there can be different types of propositional attitudes. This she can do. Different types of mental states interact with each other and themselves in characteristic ways. Again, putting it crudely, if the creature desires a particular object, and believes that it has access to that particular object, then it is going to appropriate the object of its belief. Beliefs and desires interact with each other in this characteristic way. Different types of mental state do not merely have characteristic interaction patterns with other types of mental state, they also interact with states of the same type in characteristic ways. For a state to count as a belief state, it has to be such

77 Conformity to a theory of thought is only a necessary condition of being a thinker. It cannot also be a sufficient condition. A well programmed robot may well behave just like a thinker, but, by hypothesis, is not in fact thinking. The challenge for the redundancy theorist is making sense of an agent as setting its own projects. It is setting one's own projects that is a sufficient condition for having mentality.

78 Whyte's success semantics is another version of a redundancy theory (Whyte, 1990). Success semantics are a little more complicated in that they require understanding the functional organisation of an agent in terms of the goals of an agent.

that confusion arises and, more often than not, is resolved when contradictions arise. For a state to count as a desire, indecision has to result when two or more desires are incompatible. These general functional constraints serve as the basis of a theory of force. In other words, belief is a particular type of attitude, but is, for the redundancy theorist, reducible to a characteristic kind of dispositional set-up.

The redundancy theorist then needs a way of individuating different mental states. This is the role of the theory of content. The difference between, for example, two different belief states is in terms of their fine grained functional role. That is, which states, both potential and actual, it is incompatible with and which states and courses of action, in conjunction with particular other beliefs and desires, it tends to lead to. What the redundancy theorist needs is something which they can use in conjunction with their theory of force to pick out any possible mental state. The theory of content is then, to use Brian Loar's helpful terminology, a way of indexing particular states.

1.4 Indexing Mental States

It is important to see just how strange the picture that is emerging is. A system of indexing does not provide information about the vertical connections between mental states and the world. It does not provide us with information about what it is for someone who has the belief that chocolate is a snack to have taken the world to meet a particular criterion – that of chocolate being a snack. Instead, it provides, in conjunction with a theory of force, a way of picking out a unique functional state. But, as the previous chapter made clear, there is more to a belief than it being a particular functional state. There needs to be an account of what it is for the belief that chocolate is a snack to be true or false. As Jennifer Hornsby puts it redundancy theories take there to be two distinct tasks:

> One is the task of dealing with the features of such states as beliefs and desire in virtue of which they play the role they do in causal explanation; the other is the task of saying how such states, and how the sentences of human language, relate to the world at large.
>
> (Hornsby, 1989, p. 549)

But, as Hornsby goes on to point out, such two task theorists have to confront the

question: why truth? (Hornsby, 1989, p. 550). Of course, I have already shown one answer to that question. We have to be able to make sense of truth in order to make sense of our explicit understanding of theories of meaning and theories of thought. So, the challenge I am going to pose to redundancy theories is: how do we have explicit knowledge of truth?

Now, on a redundancy theory, a theory of content needs to do two things. These are Hornsby's two tasks. The first task is that it needs to individuated particular states, the second is that it needs to explain aboutness. The hope is that we can find a way of indexing mental states, and can then assign truth conditions to the indices. The idea being that the indices pick out all possible functional states of a system. Just so long as the truth conditions assigned to each index are also the truth conditions of the state indexed, we will have produced a theory of content. However, there is in principle no limit to the possible functional states of a system, and so there is no limit to the indexing system. As result, we cannot, even in principle, assign indices to states in a piecemeal fashion. This rules out starting with truth conditions and lining them up with functional states. And, even if we could, it would not fulfil the first task. A 1-1 mapping between indexes and truth conditions and a 1-1 mapping between indexes and mental states does not form part of an account of the mental role of different states. It would also not help to explain the interconnections between functional states. However, as states are individuated by their functional role, if the theorist can find an indexing system which mirrors those functional connections, then, as long as she can find a way of mapping the indexes to the states, she can capture the mental roles of different states. If she can then define truth conditions for those indices, she will have completed both tasks. This puts some serious constraints on the indexing system. But, as it seems plausible that it is possible to build a truth conditional theory of thought, and that such a theory is built using sentences, it seems plausible that anything which has the syntactical richness of a human language can be used as an indexing system. The theorist by using the recursive apparatus built by Tarski, can then define truth for the declarative sentences of a particular language.

The idea is that anything with the syntactic richness of an actual language can be used to index mental states. Languages are only special because they are our way of indexing mental states. In addition, Tarski has shown us how to define truth predicate,

T-in-L for certain artificial languages. It does not seem far-fetched to think that with enough ingenuity human languages can be regimented in such a way that they succumb to Tarski's apparatus. Tarski's apparatus is so helpful because it shows us how we can define a predicate in a metalanguage whose extension will be all and only the sentences of an object language, L, which are preanalytically called "true". In a sense, the metalanguage in which we define the truth predicate, T-in-L, is an artificial language. It provides a characterisation of the extension of T-in-L by having an expression for each of the different subsentential expressions of the object language, and providing axioms, which when applied, result in formulae of the form "S is T-in-L if and only if p". It thus provides a syntactic characterisation of the extension of T-in-L. However, whatever model we use, whatever interpretation we give to the primitives, treating T-in-L as equivalent to the everyday notion of truth allows us to capture the valid inferences of L.

That is okay if the interest is in capturing the valid inferences of an object language. It does not tell us how to interpret the metalanguage in which we have defined T-in-L. In order to do that, the theorist needs a pre-theoretical grip on the truth conditions of the sentences of L. In the next chapter, I am going to vindicate treating sentences as meaningful in such a way that we can have a pre-theoretical grip on the truth conditions of the sentences of the object language. However, denying LPT is precisely to deny that we get our grip on truth via our grip on meaning. The redundancy theorist has to treat the truth predicate she defines on her indices as redundant. She can generate axioms of the form: S is true if and only if p. However, in order to understand those axioms she needs a prior grip on the truth values of the sentences used on the right-hand side. Loar is well aware of this. He writes:

> On this sentential-index theory of beliefs, however, the situation is radically altered [from LPT]. For to each belief a certain sentence is assigned, but that sentential index is not thereby in the language of the believer. Consequently, the Tarskian apparatus can now be employed in ascribing truth conditions to beliefs, not under their descriptions as sentential attitudes, but interlinguistically ascribable "propositional" attitudes. Now if T is the appropriate Tarski-type truth predicate for the content language L (i.e. if it catches the preanalytically [pre-theoretically] correct truth conditions), *the belief that s is true just in case Ts*. The inductive characterisation of T thereby gives us an inductive characterisation of truth for beliefs.
>
> (Loar, 1981, pp. 153–154)

Loar is taking thinkers to have a pre-theoretic grasp on the truth conditions for beliefs, and tries to prove that they are necessarily equivalent to the 'T-conditions' of an “appropriate Tarski-type truth predicate” for the language of the theory. Mental states with the functional role typical of beliefs happen to have a vertical connection with the world. So, beliefs do also have truth-conditions. Beliefs can be indexed by sentences for which it is possible to define a truth predicate, T-in-L. As there is a one-to-one indexing between beliefs and sentences, and each belief does have a truth condition, each sentence picks up unique truth conditions giving flesh to an otherwise empty predicate. This is, as Loar points out, a redundancy theory of truth for sentences but a correspondence (correlation) theory truths for beliefs (Loar, 1981, pp. 166–170).

However, what Loar misses is that he needs an account of how it is that we get a pre-theoretical grip on truth for beliefs. It is to Loar's credit that he is aware of a series of issues. The first issue is that by making functional role do the work in individuating mental states it seems mysterious that they should be about the world at all. The second issue is that all sorts of non-equivalent truth predicates would be sufficient for indexing mental states. After all, all that is required is something with fine-grained syntactical richness. What is important for the indexing system is that it shares a structure with the structure of a mind. It is the syntactical notion of validity that is doing the trick. So, there is no particular reason why we should be so interested in the kind of truth predicates that Tarski showed how to define. A predicate like "is T and for all x, x = x" would do just as well as the central predicate of the indexing system. The third issue is that, as Loar maintains that thinking is not in any sense the manipulation of concepts, thinking is not the internal equivalent of speaking a language. So, there is a problem working out which sentences best index the beliefs, and that in turn plays out in difficulties in providing interpretations of the theory's primitive expressions. Why should the theory's word "blue" or the relevant Gödel number be satisfied by all and only the blue objects, and not, say all and only the blue and blue-ish greenish objects? (Loar, 1981, p. 182). The predicate thus defined will be a different predicate but adequate for indexing mental states.

1.5 No Explicit Knowledge

The problem Loar sets himself is showing why it is truth, and not some variant predicate, that we are so interested in, and he takes it that doing that thereby justifies attributing determinate reference conditions to mental states (Loar, 1981, p. 174). Now, if Loar's strategies worked it would thereby justify attributing determinate reference conditions to mental states. Loar could have his redundancy theory of truth for sentences, and his correlation theory of truth for beliefs. However, Loar does not notice that there is a problem making sense of how it is that we ever got our pre-theoretical grasp of truth in the first place. On Loar's theory not only are mental states not representational, they are only contingently about the world. On the redundancy picture, the ground floor thinker is one who has a mental setup which contingently displays the a priori structure of rationality. That mental setup is not a self-contained system. There are horizontal connections between mental states, but also between mental states and situations in the world. So, there are horizontal connections between states of that system and the rest of the world. However, in order to recognise that there are vertical connections between mental states and the world, the ground floor thinker needs to come to see how her mental states are also about situations. That is, she needs to gain knowledge of the correlations between her mental state and the world. Doing that is a matter of learning to attribute mental states to herself and others using an indexing system. The problem is that the indexing system is in and of itself so much uninterpreted verbal behaviour. To make sense of it as attributing a vertical, semantic dimension to her functional states, the infant thinker needs to provide an interpretation of the indexing system. But, to get in a position to interpret the indexing system, she needs a pre-theoretical grasp on the truth of her beliefs. That is, she needs a pre-theoretical grasp on the vertical, semantic dimension of her mental states. And, that is just what is to be explained.

The problem can be put another way. Beliefs are such that they are about the world. So, somebody who knows the content belief is somebody who knows which situation that belief is about. However, on a redundancy account, contents are no more than indices for beliefs. Knowing the content of the belief is just knowing a way of identifying that belief. It leaves untouched the question of which situation the belief is about. Brian Loar's ingenious suggestion is that the very same things which we used to

index beliefs are also the sort of thing for which we can define a truth predicate. Armed with a grasp of the theory of truth for our indices, we are able to grasp the vertical connections between beliefs and the world. However, there is just no way of grasping the theory of truth for our indices. We get our grasp of truth by grasping which situations our beliefs are about. One wants to say, by grasping the content of our beliefs. But, the content is just an index. All that matters to an indexing system is that it has the necessary syntactical richness.

The problem becomes acute when we think about using Gödel numbers to do the indexing. Gödel numbers could be mapped to belief states, and, according to the redundancy theorist, that captures the content of those beliefs. We might then try to define a truth predicate for those Gödel numbers. However, as our only grasp on truth is in terms of the contents of beliefs, our only understanding of the 'meaning' of the Gödel numbers on the right-hand side of our statements will be in terms of the truth-conditions of the beliefs that they index. It should now be quite clear that we have not accounted for our grasp of the intentionality of mental states. We have an uninterpreted indexing system, which can only be interpreted by appeal to that which it is to interpret. In order to get a pre-theoretical grasp on the truth of beliefs we need to be able to interpret an indexing system. And in order to interpret the indexing system we need to get a pre-theoretical grasp on the truth of beliefs.

This is not yet to say that all redundancy theories of truth are hopeless. What is hopeless is thinking that our grip on intentionality comes via our understanding of the content of mental states. So far, it is still possible to maintain that truth is primarily a property of linguistic items, because what we understand, in the first instance, are uses of sentences. I am going to come back to these linguistic priority redundancy views at the end of the chapter. What the redundancy theory needs is an account of the intentionality of sentences that does not require a prior grasp on the intentionality of thoughts.

§2 Sui Generis Theories of Mind

I now turn to views which see only one task for the theorist of thought. These

will appeal to an interpretive account of truth. They start from the thought that beliefs, and other mental states are about the world, and use that to explain why that state has the horizontal connections that it does. On this sort of view, a creature believes that p when it takes it to be the case that p. Taking it to be the case that p is seen as constitutive of what it is to be the belief that p. So, such views treat truth as accounting for intentionality. Acts of judgement are takings of the world. On the interpretive view, taking true is treated as basic. So, an act of judgement has to be understood in terms of what it would be for the resulting belief to be true where truth is an irreducible and basic notion. It also requires truth to be an evaluative notion. To understand taking the world to be a certain way as basic is to understand an act of judgement as setting a criterion which the world must meet if the judgement is to be correct. The upshot is that, given a set of projects, situations in the world provide standards for hypothetical evaluation, and also standards for evaluating an act of judgement qua act of judgement. The judgement that there is cheese to the left is wrong in all situations in which there is not cheese to the left. On these views, reasons are both reasons to do something, and also standards by which acts of judgement can be assessed. The final idea is that we can only understand what it is to make a judgement in terms of those standards of assessment.

Such a theory does not face the same problem as a redundancy view. Agents are straightforwardly responding to reasons. It tries to make sense of what thinkers do when they are thinking by appeal to idealising explanations. In other words, thinker's behaviour is made sense of in terms of the constitutive ideal of rationality. The interpretive theorist treats having a conceptual capacity as, irreducibly, the capacity to adopt a range of propositional attitudes. She treats a propositional attitude as more than a disposition to respond to situations. Instead, she treats adopting a propositional attitude as a fully fledged response to a reason. Importantly, on an interpretive theory, it makes sense to think of a thinking creature as trying to be rational. So, on these views, building a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought requires coming to see how the truth values of thoughts are determined by different features of the world. It is a matter of working out how the world strikes the thinker by understanding how features of the world, including perhaps her mental states, feature as grounds and consequences for that thinker. The key thought is that instead of capturing a concept in terms of its effect on the dispositional setup of a thinker, we capture the difference a concept makes to the

mental life of a thinker in terms of its contribution to the truth values of thoughts in which it can occur. Because propositional attitudes are appealed to as part of rationalising explanations of behaviour, they are understood in terms of the way that the truth values affect the mental and practical life of a thinker. Types of attitude and not captured by describing characteristic dispositions, but by thinking about what the adoption of an attitude of a particular type commits you, permits you, and forbids you to do. So, truth is seen as organising the mental life of a thinker and conceptual capacities described by showing how concepts make a systematic difference to what a thinker is warranted in doing. In other words, to assign a mental value to a concept or thought is thereby to assign it a mental role and truth is understood as a substantial, evaluative property.

This leaves the interpretive theorist with a stronger conception of freedom. The redundancy theorist limited freedom to the freedom to set one's own projects. That allowed her to make sense of situations in the world as providing hypothetical oughts, and thus as allowing for the evaluation of the creature's mental states. The interpretive theorist maintains that thinking is taking the world to be a certain way. This is a stronger conception of freedom. It is the freedom to recognise how things might be, and, when things go well, how things are. It is also the freedom to respond to that awareness as you see fit. It is this stronger conception of freedom that helps explain why attributions of propositional attitudes are done, on views of this kind, in terms of idealising explanations. We cannot make sense of a thinker who does not exercise that freedom responsibly. Although she need have no conception that this is what she is up to, what she has to be trying to do is get things right. What we, as theorists, are trying to do is make sense of what figures, for that thinker, as a ground for what and what figures as a consequence of what. We have to be aware that she may, from time to time, through inattention or confusion, make mistakes, but, by and large we must be able to see her as getting things right. In so doing, it is more than likely, that we will have to expand our conception of what is right. When we do, we will have to expand our conception either of what there is, or of what is rational or both. However, our ever expanding conception of what there is and of what is rational is used as an ideal by which we make sense of the capacities of a thinker. We make sense of her exercises of those capacities as governed by that ideal.

However, the kind of theories I am looking at in this chapter still have a functionalist flavour. They are functional organisation views. They do not treat thinking as a matter of manipulating concepts and standing in relations to thoughts. If they did, they would collapse into a mental fact view. I showed in chapter 2 that a designation development of such a view cannot meet the explicit knowledge constraint. In this section, I am going to briefly argue that the same is true of interpretive developments. The focus of the section will be on functional organisation interpretive views. On interpretive views propositional attitudes are fully fledged responses to reasons, and not merely dispositions, but, like on redundancy views, that is an ability, albeit a rational one. Concept possession is then a rational ability to keep track of a feature of the environment. In other words, one possesses a concept because one can discriminate items in the extension of that concept from items not in the extension[79]. Thinking is not a matter of learning to work with some mind independent Fregean system of thought. Christopher Peacocke is somebody who has developed just such a view (see for example, Peacocke, 1986 and Peacocke, 1999)[80].

The theory distinguishes between complete and incomplete acts of thinking. The complete acts of thinking are the adoption of propositional attitudes, and the

79 Discriminating items in the extension of the concept does not require having a conception of concepts or extensions. It is simply to have a rational ability to differentially respond to things in the world.

80 Peacocke takes his theory to be neutral between LPT and its denial. However, he does think it is compatible with a strong mental priority thesis, and, is himself, committed to such a thesis (Peacocke, 1997, p. 3). In laying out his views, I am going to treat him as presenting them in defence of a mental priority thesis. This is perhaps a little unfair on Peacocke as Peacocke does not address the question of explicit knowledge. However, I think this is because Peacocke does not think, or perhaps does not notice, that there is a problem. This results in a certain ambiguity about what Peacocke takes to be the thought priority theory. On the one hand, he claims that the linguistic priority thesis claims "the explanatory priority of thought over language" (Peacocke, 1997, p. 3), and that the thought priority thesis reverses that priority. On the other, he claims that the thought priority thesis denies that "if there can be cases of conceptual thought without language, the philosophical explanation of the nature of thoughts in question must make reference to language at some point" (Peacocke, 1997, p. 4). The latter claim is weaker, and, I think, the actual claim that Peacocke wishes to defend. As will become apparent, I am in agreement with Peacocke over the weak claim. However, I think the interest in linguistic priority has always been strong claim, and that is our access to reflective knowledge is through understanding language not through understanding mental content.

incomplete acts of thinking are the deployment of concepts. The analogue of the theory of force accounts for the distinction between different types of propositional attitudes. It does so in terms of the truth values of thoughts. Concepts are that which explain the assignation of truth conditions to thoughts and the inferential connections between them. Combining the two parts provides an explanation of the grounds and consequences of each particular act of thinking. The content of a concept is then explained as that concept's contribution to the truth values of thoughts in which it can occur, and the content of a thought is its truth conditions. The upshot is that a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought models the practical capacity of thinking by describing the mental roles of concepts and thoughts in terms of their rational connections. It thus provides an ideal by which actual behaviour can be understood. Thinkers regularly fail to live up to that standard and might even be disposed to make mistakes, but the interpretive theorist aims to make sense of their behaviour by evaluating it in the light of the rational standards described by the correct bipartite theory.

2.1 The Analysis of Propositional Attitudes

So far, so familiar. The big questions are, on these views:

A. What are thoughts?

B. What are concepts?

The short answer to A is that a thought is a possible content of an act of thinking. The short answer to B is that a concept is a capacity to have a range of propositional attitudes. But, I want to be able to have more to say than that. Fortunately, one can.

On sui generis views an agent adopts a propositional attitude when it recognises and responds to a reason. Which propositional attitude has been adopted is determined by how the attitude functions in the mental life of the agent. To oversimplify things, a rat which has the project of looking for cheese adopts the belief that there is cheese in front of it when it recognises the cheese in front of it. It manifests that belief by gobbling up the cheddar that it has found. It adopts the desire that it should have cheese when it wants cheese. It manifests that desire by going out looking for the stuff. A bipartite truth conditional theory of thought models the practice of thinking. It does so

by putting the theorist in a position to give the grounds for and consequences of adopting different propositional attitudes. That is, it allows one to make a statement of the mental role of each thought. It also allows the theorist to specify the content of anything with that mental role. However, unlike on the sort of concept fact views I looked at in the previous chapter, thinkers are not grasping thoughts or manipulating concepts, content is still seen as a product of what thinkers do. A theory of thought is still a description of the dispositional setup of a thinker, but it is a dispositional setup that can only be understood from the perspective of the constitutive ideal of rationality.

What then, on these views, is a thought? Answering that question involves thinking about thinking. Thinking is an activity that agents undertake. That activity involves recognising and responding to reasons. What counts as a reason and how the agent responds to it both, in part, depend on the attitude of the agent. Importantly, the same situation on different occasions figures differently as a reason for the same agent. A theory of thought needs to make sense of this by modelling it. It starts with the basic mental acts which are adopting particular propositional attitudes. They are typed by their mental role. That is, by the grounds and consequences of adopting a given attitude. However, as there is something in common between believing that p and desiring that p or any other attitude towards the situation that p, the theory needs to be powerful enough to model that. It achieves that goal by taking the bipartite form. It can make general comments about the propriety of adopting types of propositional attitude with an arbitrary content, and then find a way of specifying what contents are possible. "Thought" is a term of art in a theory of that activity. A thought turns out to be the content of a possible propositional attitude. However, as Dummett rightly complains against Searle "content" is not a well defined notion (in Dummett, 1991, p. 252). In order to work out what a content is I am going to turn my attention to concepts.

A creature which is thinking is a minimally autonomous creature. A minimally autonomous creature has something like a world view. That is, there are things that it wants and, consequently, it has some conception of how things are. But, as I showed in chapter 1, having some conception of how things are requires being able to keep track of objects. On sui generis views, a creature keeps track of objects by recognising properties, and when it does so it possesses concepts. For example, if a lab rat is able to recognise a variety of different objects as edible, it possesses the concept of being

edible. If it can distinguish cheese from chow, perhaps by consistently preferring cheese to chow, it has the concept of cheese. In addition, the lab rat will be able to recognise the same object as the same on more than one occasion. When it can do that, it has the concept of that object. For example, if it can recognise a junction in a maze on a variety of occasions as the same junction, it possesses the concept of that junction. The upshot is that possession of a concept is a practical matter. It is a matter of being able to adopt particular propositional attitudes in response to how things are in the world. Concepts are that which account for the rational links between different propositional attitudes and between attitudes and behaviour, but they are also capacities to respond to objects, properties and relations.

Thinking, on these views, involves recognising and responding to situations as reasons. A creature that does that is thereby deploying concepts. Because there can be nothing more to a conceptual capacity than the abilities of someone who has full possession of the relevant concept, in describing a concept the theorist describes the capacity of someone who has gained the complete conceptual capacity. Those capacities are always the capacities to adopt a range of propositional attitudes. So, a conceptual capacity is only exercised in the adoption of propositional attitudes, and the concept captured by describing the capacity involved to have a particular range of propositional attitudes. But, as there is nothing more to the nature of a concept than is captured by a description of the capacity to have a particular range of propositional attitudes, a concept is a capacity to have a range of attitudes. This is well captured by Christopher Peacocke in his simple formulation of concept possession:

> **Simple Formulation** Concept *F* is that unique concept C to possess which a thinker must meet condition (C).
>
> … "C" is a genuine variable over concepts, and is a schematic variable.
>
> (Peacocke, 1999, p. 6)

The conditions (C), acquisition conditions, specify what sort of mental capacities a thinker has to have in order to possess a particular concept. Those capacities are specified in terms of the kinds of propositional attitudes a thinker can engage in. Two concepts differ by being different capacities to have propositional attitudes. This is for the simple reason that, as a concept is a capacity to have a range of attitudes, if they were the same capacity, they would be the same concept. Propositional attitudes are

typed by the grounds for and consequences of adopting that attitude. So, concepts are typed by the difference they make to the rational connections of thoughts in which they can occur. As a result, the concept is a capacity to make a series of rational transitions (including transitions from external input to propositional attitude and transitions from attitudes to behavioural output)[81].

Now, a creature that is thinking is a creature with an evaluative worldview. Having an evaluative worldview is a matter of being able to desire certain outcomes, to recognise that things are a particular way and to act to fulfil one's desires. A creature that does that is a concept possessor. But, from this it follows that a creature which has propositional attitudes is a creature which possesses concepts. The creature in no sense needs to acquire the concept in order to acquire the propositional attitudes, rather concept possession is just part of its capacity to have those propositional attitudes[82]. This is brought out by Peacocke's "principle of dependence":

> **Principle of Dependence** There can be nothing more to the nature of a concept than is determined by a correct account of the capacity of a thinker who has mastered that concept to have propositional attitudes to contents containing that concept.
>
> (Peacocke, 1999, p. 5)

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81 I take it this is what justifies Peacocke's "principle of dependence": "Concepts C and D are distinct if and only if there are two complete propositional contents that differ at most in that one contains C substituted in one or more places for D, and one of which is informative while the other is not" (Peacocke, 1999, p. 2). Philipse complains that Peacocke's principle of dependence only limits the domain of concepts on pain of making concepts identical with meanings. Peacocke's principle is the mental analogue of Frege's account of sense. However, senses are senses of words, and so we can always ask: is the sense of *this word* the same as the sense of *that word*? (This way of thinking about Frege owes a lot to Gareth Evans and what he labels "the Intuitive Criterion of Difference" (Evans, 1982, p. 18)). Philipse complains that we have no such access to concepts to ask if two concepts are differently informative (Philipse, 1994, p. 228). I think this objection only looks powerful because of the way Peacocke presents his thesis. Peacocke presents his principle of dependence before he discusses what a concept is. But, when we see that a concept is a capacity to make rational connections between a range of propositional attitudes, then the principle of dependence becomes a priori. It is not introduced to allow us to pick out or distinguish between concepts. It is introduced as part of an account of what a concept is.

82 I think this helps explain why it seems plausible that thinking is innate, whereas language use has to be learnt.

An act of thinking is an intentional mental state. It is about the world. But, it is about the world by being a rational response to it. In other words, an act of thinking is not a response to a thought but to a situation. But, if two creatures have the same structure to their rationality, the same structure to their rational responses, they will have the same thoughts. "Thought", and by extension "concept" are terms in a theory of the mentality of thinkers. They are part of a theory of what is going on when a creature is thinking. A thought is that which a creature thinks when it adopts a propositional attitude. Thus, a thought is the content of a possible propositional attitude. Concepts are capacities to have propositional attitudes. Attributing concepts to a thinker accounts for the inferential links between its propositional attitudes. Possessing a concept is a matter of being able to recognise and respond to a particular item in the world, so a concept is a way of thinking about some item in the world. Both thoughts and concepts are respectable objects. Being the content of a possible propositional attitude is a respectable property. It provides a criterion of identity for something to be a thought. Being a way of thinking about an item in the world is also a respectable property. It provides a criterion of identity for something to be a concept. As a result, there is no reason not to treat thoughts or concepts as objects and quantify over them. Or, to put it positively, there are thoughts and concepts. However, these objects are what Dummett labelled "dependent objects". A good example of a dependent object is a chess move:

> There are many different moves which [chess] pieces have had in obsolete or still-practiced variations of chess, such as those of the pieces called camel and giraffe in Tamerlane's 'great chess'; and there must be countless other possible moves that might be assigned to pieces in versions of chess that have never been played or thought of. It is harmless to say that 'there are' such moves; but it would be insane to deny that moves are *of* (actual or possible) chess pieces. This 'of' of logical dependence is not properly expressed by saying that a certain move exists only if there is a piece that has that move, since, as just noted, we can speak of moves that have never been assigned to any piece. It means, rather, that to conceive of any move is to conceive of a piece as having that move.
>
> (Dummett, 1991, p. 249)

For Dummett, chess pieces and chess moves are two distinct kinds of objects and there can be chess moves that are no longer permitted and chess moves that never have been and never will be permitted. However, there is no need to ask how chess

pieces acquire chess moves because a chess move is always a possible movement of a chess piece. This is not a supervenience thesis. There is no sense in which chess pieces, or the game itself, are more basic than the moves which might be or might have been permissible. Chess moves are simply the sort of things which chess pieces can do. The trick is to recognise that some objects are not 'self-subsistent' (Dummett, 1991, p. 249). On the positive side of the balance sheet, a dependent object is an object that is always also a property of another object. Colours are dependent objects. The colour red is a respectable object, but it is always also a property of an actual or possible surface. Dummett's favourite example is from Frege and it is directions (Frege, 1980, sec. 64). If you go north and I go north, then the direction of our travel is the same. But, in this case, the direction is the direction of your line of travel and of my line of travel. Like chess moves, colours and directions, thoughts and concepts are not self subsistent objects. Thoughts are the contents of possible propositional attitudes, and concepts are ways of thinking about possible items in the world.

I now have the resources to analyse the following sentence:

S Simple Simon believes that Jack went up the hill,

and thus make sense of what is going on when Simple Simon, or anybody else, thinks. The question which needs resolving is: is the that clause in S used to:

i. predicate the two place relation of belief between Simple Simon and a thought, or,

ii. pick out a state of Simple Simon's, that of believing that Jack went up the hill?

Thoughts are the contents of possible propositional attitudes. However, it does not follow that a belief is a relation between a thinker and a thought. The previous two sections have made clear that thinking is recognising and responding to reasons. Simple Simon can do that because he possesses the conceptual capacities to track Jack's movements around the landscape. Little Red Riding Hood and Simple Simon can have the same thoughts because the structure of their mentality is the same. That is, they recognise and respond to the same reasons because they have the same conceptual capacities, and thus posses the same concepts. But, when someone responds to a reason, what that person responds to is not a thought but a situation. Acts of thinking, the

adoptings of propositional attitudes, are intentional mental states, and being intentional mental states, they are not about thoughts, but about situations. Because a propositional attitude is about a situation it has a content. But, a propositional attitude cannot simultaneously be about a situation and about its own content. As a result, the correct analysis of S is ii. Believing that Jack went up the hill is something that Simple Simon does. The phrase which follows "believes that", in this case "Jack went up the hill", gives the content of the propositional attitude. It is part of a representation of a mental state. As a result, S describes Simple Simon's mental state. It does so by attributing a belief to him, namely the belief with the thought that Jack went up the hill as a content.

I take it that this is the result which Davidson aims for in his paratactic account of belief (Davidson, 2001b, pp. 93–108). The sort of views which Davidson wants to reject are views that treat the that-clauses of propositional attitudes as referring to objects, and then treat propositional attitudes as relations between thinkers and objects. One reason he wants to reject such a view is that it requires treating words as having a different meaning in propositional attitude contexts. At heart, I think, the view is motivated by the attempt to deny that sentences ever designate anything. Instead, they describe things. The idea is that we need to find a way of describing the mental states of thinkers, and it is the nature of propositional attitudes that a description of them is going to require a great degree of sensitivity to the psychological make-up of the agents in question. It is the properties of an agent's mind that limit which words can be used to describe them. Davidson's ingenious solution is find an accurate description of what an agent believes/desires/claimed/etc, and then say, "she V's that" (where 'V' is a stand in for a propositional attitude verb). The end result is a description of what a thinker thinks. It does not require attributing a relation between a thinker and a thought. Davidson's paratactic account is not the only way of avoiding treating propositional attitudes as relations between thinkers and contents. One might also treat the attitude adopted as a property of an agent's total mental state. That would be to understand S as predicating the property of believing that Jack went up the hill to Simple Simon. However, whatever the correct analysis is, the end result is that clauses are used to describe mental states not to designate thoughts.

In summary, propositional attitudes are about the world. Propositional attitudes are the results of acts of thinking. They have thoughts for their content. They are the

actual or possible mental states of actual or possible agents. Thoughts are the contents of actual or possible propositional attitudes. They are dependent objects. Two thinkers have the same propositional attitude, which is to say an attitude with the same content, when they have exercised the same conceptual capacities in an act of thinking of the same type. They have the same conceptual capacities when they are able to keep track of the same features of the world and when the mental roles of the thoughts which result from an exercise of those capacities are the same. In other words, when the same bipartite truth conditional theory of thought describes both thinkers.

2.2 No Explicit Knowledge

The problem for the mental priority theorist is that explicit knowledge of what she is thinking requires recognising, of her propositional attitudes, what way for the world to be they are about. Understanding what situation a propositional attitude is about requires knowing what way for the world to be it is a response to. It also requires understanding what kind of response it is. Furthermore, it requires understanding how that attitude makes a systematic difference to the activity of thinking. In other words, it requires understanding the content.

The next stage of the argument is showing that because a sui generis view of the mind treats ascriptions of contents as descriptions of the mental roles of states, thinkers cannot have explicit knowledge of content. The basic problem is epistemic access. On a sui generis view of the mind, having knowledge of something, implicit or explicit, requires being able to recognise and respond to that thing. What is required for explicit knowledge is the concept of a concept, and that concept needs to be gained by coming to the concepts of your ground floor concepts. So, what the mental priority theorist needs to show is how you could recognise and respond to concepts. The reason that she cannot do so is that, in an important sense, concepts are not parts of mental states. This is because a propositional attitude is not an attitude to a content, but an attitude towards a way for things to be. The content of a mental state is a dependent object. It relies for its existence on being a property of a possible propositional attitude. Now, some dependent objects might well be recognisable as a property of the self-subsistent objects

on which they depend. However, that is only possible when the self-subsistent object can engage in causal interactions, but propositional attitudes are themselves dependent on abstract objects. A propositional attitude, presumably, depends for its existence either on a brain state or on a behavioural state of the thinker. The behavioural state of the thinker is a matter of what a thinker is doing. It is also a dependent and abstract object. It depends for its existence on a spatially and temporally extended state of the world. It is this last thing that creatures have access to. Non-language using thinkers are in no position to recognise and respond to brain states, and being able to recognise the physical manifestations of thinking as physical manifestations of thinking requires already having the concept of concepts. So, non-language using creatures have no access to their concepts and the contents of their mental states. They cannot have explicit understanding of their own mental states.

This is not true of language users. We can come to an understanding of abstract objects by understanding what it is for claims about those abstract to be true. The simple thought is that claims are made using sentences, and, although sentences are abstract objects, they are physically instantiated in utterances and inscriptions. The thought is that by gaining an understanding of truth as an evaluative property of language use, speakers are able to understand how sub-sentential expressions make a systematic difference to the truth values of sentences in which they can occur. This allows speakers to come to understand the intentionality of uses of language, and gives them the concept of a concept and concepts of their concepts. They are then able to make sense of themselves as thinking about the world. I then, somewhat stipulatively, distinguish between sentences and mental states by making the former representations whilst denying that title to the latter. The idea is that a representation is an intentional item that requires understanding for its intentionality to be of use to thinkers, where as mental states are intentional items useful simply by being had. Another way of seeing this difference is that representations present ways for the world to be, mental states are responses to ways the world to be. The key thought of this section is that mental states are had where as sentences understood.

Explicit knowledge of mental content

The discussion of deflationary theories has, I hope, shown that explicit knowledge requires awareness of your own perspective on the world. It is to be able to understand yourself as recognising and responding to ways for things to be. Furthermore, it requires recognising what it is that you are recognising and responding to. Somebody who knows all of that is somebody who knows two things:

A. What the content of their propositional attitudes are.

B. What type of propositional attitudes they can have.

In other words, what you have to know is what is captured by a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought. What such a theory captures is the mental roles of thoughts and concepts. So, what those with explicit knowledge of what they think have knowledge of are the mental roles of their thoughts and concepts. As I showed in the introduction, that requires understanding two dimensions. The first dimension is the horizontal dimension. That is, the systematic difference each propositional attitude makes to the activity of thinking. The second dimension is the vertical dimension. That is, what ways for the world to be each propositional attitude is an attitude towards. Somebody who understands both those dimensions is somebody who understands of any given propositional attitude what way for the world to be it is a response to, and what kind of response it is. So, somebody who knows that they believe that there is cheese in front of them is somebody who realises that they are responding to the thing in front of them as cheese and that that response is to take it to be the case that there is cheese in front of them. Somebody who knows that they want to have some cheese is somebody who knows that they are responding to the state of affairs of them consuming cheese by wanting it to be the case.

What makes a sui generis view of the mind unique is that it treats those two dimensions as only nominally separate. The sui generis theorist maintains that you can only understand the kinds of responses which thinkers make in intentional terms. That is, they think that the way to understand the activity of thinking is to see thinkers as taking attitudes towards ways for things to be. They think that understanding what that attitude is needs to be done in terms of what makes that attitude 'correct'. This means that they think the way to understand the activity of thinking, the way to understand what thinkers do, is in irreducibly rational terms. The minimalist and the redundancy theorist maintain that you can separate these two projects. They think that you can

understand the responses in dispositional terms, and then show how those responses are responses to ways for things to be. But, either way, having explicit knowledge requires knowledge of both dimensions.

What I need to show is that, on a sui generis view, without language, thinkers cannot come to recognise that they are thinking about the world. To do so, I am going to reiterate just what is involved in having explicit knowledge of the vertical dimension. What is required is that thinkers understand what their thoughts are about. To do so they need to know what it would be for their thoughts to be true. However, the truth value of a thought depends in part on how things are in the world and in part on the concepts out of which that thought is composed. Understanding what it is for a thought to be true requires understanding the contribution of the concepts to the truth value of the thought. So, somebody who understands what it is for a thought to be true is somebody who understands of the concepts out of which the thought is composed what their mental values are. That understanding, like all other understanding, requires having the requisite concepts. That requires having the concept of a concept. In addition, you cannot recognise that something is the mental value of a concept without having the concept of that concept. So, one also needs the concept of the concepts involved. In other words, someone with explicit knowledge is somebody who has some understanding of thinking as the exercise of concepts, and has some conception of the concepts that they are deploying in their engagement with the world.

Non-language users have no access to mental content

On a sui generis view of the mental, having a belief about a situation requires recognising and responding to it as a reason to judge that things are that way. Having a desire is holding something to be valuable. Forming an intention to do something is being ready to embark on a particular course of action given the right circumstances. But, all of those are to be in a particular mental state, albeit a state with content. As I have already shown, for the sui generis theorist, a content is a dependent object. It is not a Fregean thought, off in the third realm, to be recognised, apprehended and judged, desired, intended and so on. I am going to focus, for simplicity's sake, on the attitude of belief. However, what I am going to say can be equally well applied to any type of

propositional attitude. In belief, to use my hackneyed example, believing that cheese is present requires recognising that there is cheese present.

Now, there needs to be some mechanism by which the creature recognises the presence of cheese as a reason to judge that there is cheese. There are two plausible mechanisms. These are a direct and indirect mechanism. In the direct mechanism, the presence of the cheese is taken to be the immediate object of judgement. In the indirect mechanism it is a sensual experience as of cheese that is taken as the immediate object of judgement. Importantly, it is a disagreement over mechanism, and not over what is a reason for what. Both the direct and indirect theorist treats the presence of cheese as a reason to form the belief that there is cheese. The direct theorist takes the cheese to be the immediate object of judgement, and the indirect theorist takes it that the mechanism goes via it being presented as a cheese[83]. However, whichever mechanism is adopted propositional attitudes are, on sui generis views, relational states, and their contents merely a way of encoding information about those states. As Peacocke puts it in describing his position:

> According to this proposal, there is some relational property R with two characteristics. First, the relational property R can be specified by mentioning no relations to concepts or thoughts but only relations to other empirical things and states. Second, "John believes that Lincoln Plaza is Square" is equivalent to the conjunction of (5) and (6):
>
> (5) John is in some state S that has the relational property R
>
> (6) the content that Lincoln Plaza is square is the unique content p such that necessarily for any state S, S is a belief that p iff S has the relational property R.
>
> (Peacocke, 1992, p. 106)

The unique content that Lincoln Plaza is square is a function of possession conditions of the concepts which are required for a thinker to be able to have propositional attitudes with that content. In other words, it is a function of the possession conditions of the concept of Lincoln Plaza and the concept of being square.

But, this means that the content of the state has no role in John's coming to judge that Lincoln Plaza is square. Instead, talk of content is useful to the theorist in

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83 Peacocke himself takes that to be a distinction between those who treat the content of judgement to be neo-Russellian propositions and those who treat the content to be a Fregean senses (Peacocke, 1992, pp. 69-74). For reasons which will become apparent, I think this way of treating the issue is wrong. Propositions cannot be the objects of judgement, and that is what is under discussion here.

identifying a particular mental state. This is structurally similar to the redundancy proposal that states are typed by their fine-grained functional role, and indexed using some other system. Peacocke acknowledges this:

> What the requirements here aim to do is state the (often counterfactual) relations in which a belief state must stand if it is to be the relevant belief that Lincoln Plaza is square. Two belief states that both meet these requirements may differ radically in their other actual and counterfactual relations. I am in effect using a notion of the canonical conceptual role for a belief with a given propositional content. That role is fixed by the canonical roles, the possession conditions, of the conceptual constituents of the complete propositional content. My approach is, then, a kind of conceptual-role semantics, under which attribution of states with conceptual content allows us to classify together two individuals with very different beliefs and overall psychological economies.
>
> (Peacocke, 1992, p. 111)

There is however an important difference. On the redundancy proposal the indexing system has no word-world relations, but this is not the case on the sui generis proposal. The raison d'être of the sui generis proposal is that rational agents recognise and respond to reasons. When it comes to forming beliefs, a rational agent makes a judgement about how things are. This requires making sense of belief as an agent taking the world to be a particular way. The agent is able to do that because it has the requisite conceptual capacities, and, as captured by the (C) form, having the requisite conceptual capacities is a matter of being able to recognise, at least when things go well, when the relevant mental values are instantiated. The sui generis proposal does not suffer from the problem that contents lack mental values.

As Peacocke further acknowledges, the (C) form aims to identify concepts in terms of conceptual capacities, and as a result "a theory of concepts should be a theory of concept possession" (Peacocke, 1999, p. 5). The (C) form results from treating concept possession as a matter of having a practical capacity, albeit a practical capacity that can only be explained by rationalising explanations. That is, by seeing the agent as trying to respond to reasons. That is, at the very least, trying to avoid error and trying to bring it about that the world is as it wants it to be. But, having a capacity to recognise and respond to features of the world in a rational manner is simply something that agents can do. So, just as thoughts play no role in an agent's making a judgement, but encode information about what the agent is doing, it is the conceptual capacity of an

agent that matters, not the concept itself. A concept, like a thought, is an abstract object. To have the concept of a concept or the concept of a thought, one needs to be able to recognise that you are responding, rationally, to ways for things to be. In other words, you need to be on your way to building a theory of concepts.

The question now is: could you be on your way to building a theory of concepts without the ability to use and understand language? The answer is a fairly straightforward no. Human beings, like all thinkers of which we are aware, are limited by their physical make up. For us to come to an an understanding of something we need there to be some causal mechanism that allows us to have that understanding. This is not to say that all understanding must reduce to physical properties, or that all the objects that we understand can be reduced to physical objects. It is simply that we must be able to show how it is that we came to recognise and respond to an object, and there will have to be some suitable mechanistic story that makes sense of that ability.

The problem is particularly pressing with abstract objects. However, many abstract objects are dependent objects. Numbers are a good example. We can imagine a dog that stands its ground against one dog, sometimes stands its ground against two dogs, but invariably retreats when faced with three or more. It makes sense to say that such a dog has some conception of number. We can credit it with a crude understanding of a 1, 2, many arithmetic. The dog is able to recognise and respond to the number of dogs present, at least in as much as it is able to recognise 1, 2 or many as the number of dogs. However, the number of dogs is a visually available feature of the situation. It is an abstract, dependent object that is dependent on self-subsistent objects, the dogs. Similarly, the shape of Lincoln Plaza is visually available to John. Non-linguistic infants can recognise shapes. That is why they push the star-shaped object through the star-shaped hole. But, again, a star shape is an abstract, dependent object dependent on a self-subsistent material object[84].

84 I think it would be wrong to attribute the concept of the number 1 or the number 2, as defined by a 1, 2, many arithmetic to the dog. Similarly, it would be wrong to attribute the concept of being star shaped to the infant. What the dog has is an incomplete understanding of the number of dogs in a 1, 2, many arithmetic, and what the child has is the concept of the shape of the star-shaped brick. We could perhaps start to imagine a non-linguistic creature that could see what was in common between two dogs and two cats, or was able to group together all the star-shaped things. Although, it does not seem very plausible that such a creature exists.

So, why is it that thinkers cannot come to an understanding of thoughts and concepts. What makes these abstract objects special? The answer is that thoughts and concepts are dependent on a further abstract object, namely possible propositional attitudes. Propositional attitudes are mental states, and mental states are typed by the systematic difference they make to the mental life and behaviour of thinkers. That makes them abstract objects. They are plausibly dependent on one of two physically realisable states of affairs. The first is brain states, but thinkers clearly have no way of coming to recognise configurations of their own or other peoples' neurons. The second is the physically describable behaviour of thinkers. However, on a sui generis view of the mind, that requires seeing yourself and other people as responding rationally to what there is in the world. It is not enough to be able to recognise and respond to the behaviour, you need to be able to recognise and respond to the behaviour as rational behaviour. That requires applying the concepts of concepts and thoughts to what people do. That would only be possible if we grant non-linguistic creatures the inmate ability to understand the world in rational terms. It would be to grant non-linguistic thinkers the innate ability to ascribe concepts and thoughts to people. It would take a pretty diehard rationalist to think that we have the concept of concepts innately.

Of course, you might think that people, at least, are primed to come to ascribe rationality to events in the world and so, in some sense, primed to recognise other people's behaviour as rational. But, even if that is the case, we still would not have an explanation of explicit knowledge. Understanding the behaviour as others as expressing mental states requires evaluating other people's behaviour according to how the world strikes you. What you would need to be doing is interpreting the behaviour of other people. In other words, the position would be equivalent to a Davidsonian position, but without the advantage of focusing on the linguistic behaviour of your interlocutors as expressions of their propositional attitudes. I show in the next section that even if we can make sense of non-linguistic creatures as primed to treat actions as expressions of rationality, without the first meaning of an utterance being its linguistic meaning, there is still no account of explicit knowledge.

It is worth noting that this problem of our access to abstract objects rules out Frege's view of the mental in "The Thought" (1956). Frege seems to think that what human thinkers do is grasp thoughts, and thoughts are entities in the third realm.

Admittedly, Frege thinks that our access to such thoughts is through sentences. But, by making truth primarily a property of thoughts, Frege treats thoughts as self-subsistent entities. They are not dependent objects. In particular, they do not depend on possible sentences for their existence. Frege presumably thought that it is through understanding sentences that we come to grasp thoughts. However, on this view, sentences are not really things that can be understood. On this view, a thought is not the meaning of a sentence. The meaning of a sentence is a dependent object. The raison d'être of this view is that thoughts are self-subsistent objects. So, thoughts are not grasped as the meaning of sentences.

Of course, Frege might try to argue that it is through understanding the meaning of sentences that we come to grasp thoughts. However, this understanding is not a matter of recognising what it is for a sentence to be true, because it is thoughts that are, strictly speaking, true or false. Frege would need some account of what is understood in understanding a sentence that would, in the first instance, not be a matter of understanding that the sentence presents a way for the world to be, but that made sense of someone coming to grasp what it would be for the world to be that way. It seems to me that the picture presented is that hearing enough sentences is sufficient to trigger an understanding of thoughts. But we are given no reason to think that this could be what is really going on.

Understanding Representations

However, there is another way to come to an understanding of abstract objects, and that is through understanding a description of those objects. In particular, it involves being able to understand what it would be for sentences about those objects to be true. To see this, consider that it would have been possible for humans to have developed and played chess without ever making boards or chess pieces. What a chess player has to learn is which moves are possible and how making a move affects the state of the game. Now, a chess move is an abstract and dependent object. It is always a possible move of a chess piece. But, although, as it happens, we do make physical instantiations of chess pieces, a chess piece is, potentially, a fully abstract object. It can be defined by its starting position and the moves it can make. Similarly, the board is another potentially

fully abstract object. It too can be defined by the rules of chess. In other words, the existence of a set of rules governing chess, another set of abstract objects, is sufficient to define the game chess and bring into existence both chess pieces and chess moves. What chess players have to learn is how to follow those rules. In doing so they come to an understanding of the abstract objects which are the moves, the pieces and the board.

In practice, we rely on the physical instantiations to come to that understanding. But it is not necessary. However, if you were not to use a chess set, to come to understand chess you would need a different way of gaining the information required. You would need some way of coming to understand the rules. That could be done by coming to understand a description of those rules. Because a sentence is what is used when we make utterances or inscriptions, we are able to come to understand those sentences by recognising and responding to them. In the next chapter, I look in more detail at what it is to understand a sentence, but the short version is that what is required is coming to understand how truth organises language use. That involves coming to see how sub-sentential expressions make a systematic difference to the truth values of sentences in which they can occur. But, unlike with content, there is no problem with our epistemic access to sub-sentential expressions or, indeed, syntax. These are dependent objects which are dependent on sentences, and although sentences are themselves abstract objects, they are regularly physically instantiated. In fact, the real problem is coming to an understanding truth, but how you do that will be left to the next chapter.

This marks a crucial difference between sentences and thoughts. Sentences are understood where as thoughts are had. I want to say, somewhat stipulatively, that sentences are representations but thoughts are not. The crucial thought is that, although both thoughts and sentences are intentional items, they play a different role in the life of thinkers. Both thoughts and sentences are intentional items because they are both about situations by being correct or incorrect depending on how things are. In other words, both thoughts and sentences can be true or false. The role played by a sentence, the difference it makes to what a thinker understands about the world, depends on it being understood. Understanding a sentence requires understanding how its truth value is systematically determined by the contribution of its sub-sentential parts. That involves understanding that the sentence presents a way for the world to be, and so assertions of

that sentence are, in some sense, correct when the world is as the sentence presents it. You understand what way the world has to be for the sentence to be true by understanding the semantic values of its parts. A thought makes a difference to what a thinker understands about the world simply by making a systematic difference to the activity of thinking. Of course, you still understand a thought by understanding what it is for that thought to be true. However, thoughts can make a systematic difference to the what a thinker understands about the world without themselves being understood. This is not true of sentences.

2.3 Thinking About Thinking

Before moving on I want to note how much can go on at the ground floor. Consider the following plausible account of the lab rat. I want to show that it is possible for thinking about thinking to take place at the ground floor. That is, it is possible that a lab rat has implicit knowledge of its mental states. It seems to me a plausible description of the lab rat that it learns its way round the maze by making guesses as to where it should go. Imagine that it comes to a T-junction, turns left arrives at a dead end, turns round, goes back to the site of its choice and takes the right-hand exit. It seems to me plausible to say that the rat arrives at the T-junction, guesses that it should go left, reaches the dead end and realises that its guess was wrong[85]. In other words, when the rat reaches a dead end it responds to its previous guess as a reason. In fact, it realises that its previous guess was wrong. As adopting a propositional attitude requires recognising and responding to a reason, and as mental states are objects individuated by their contents, there is no a priori reason why the rat cannot be responding to a very particular guess, its guess that cheese is to the left, by realising that it was wrong. Incredibly sophisticated thinking can take place at the ground floor. But, no amount of sophistication will allow the rat to know what the content of its guess is. No amount of thinking will get the rat to the first floor. To do that it would have to learn a language so

85 Of course, it is possible to tell a different story. One might think that the rat reaches the dead end, realises that there is no joy here and so turns around. When it reaches the site of its error it is aware that left is no good, so it thinks that the route goes in the opposite direction. I am not worried about which is the better description of rat mentality. I merely want to show that thinking about thinking can, and might, take place at the ground floor.

that it could understand a representation of what it was already doing.

§3 Not Quite Linguistic Priority

In the previous two sections I showed that if, as seems plausible, a theory of thought is a description of the mental behaviour of an agent, then the ability to build and understand such a theory requires a representational medium in which to do it. In this section I want to show that in fact it is not enough that we have a representational medium, we also need to be able to understand that medium as representational. In the next chapter I am going to show how that is possible if the representational medium, language, is constituted by a rational practice which is independent of the purposes of speakers. I will show how explicit knowledge is possible if words and sentences are meaningful independently of the ways they are used by speakers. But, it might be, and has been, thought that the meaning of an utterance is a matter of the purposes of the utterer. The idea being that we can make sense of utterances and of other people at the same time. So to make it plausible that my way is the right way to think about language, I need to show that treating the meaning of an utterance as a matter of the purposes of the utterer precludes the possibility of explicit knowledge of meaning and content.

Views which do treat the meaning of an utterance as a matter of the purposes of the utterer are interpretive views of truth. These are views which accept that explicit understanding of how things are in the world and explicit understanding of what somebody thinks requires the ability to understand language use. However, such views do not think that understanding language use is a matter of understanding the meanings of sentences. The hallmark of these views is that we gain explicit knowledge of how things are and also the content of mental states by coming to explicit understanding of utterances. Utterances tend to be rational actions in that they are, in general, produced for some linguistic purpose. Explicit understanding of those utterances is a matter of grasping the purpose of those utterances. So, the hallmark of interpretive views is that understanding linguistic behaviour is really a matter of understanding each other.

3.1 How Interpretive Views Work

The problem identified with mental priority views is that mental states are about the world but, just so long as they are taken to be no more than responses to the world, they are not representational. This leaves talk of thoughts and contents as devices of mental ascent. Talk of thoughts and talk of contents become ways of talking about mental states rather than what they are about. But, this means that we have to understand language use in order to gain explicit knowledge of the contents of our mental states, and even that we have such things. Interpretive views do not want to drop the plausible thought that mental states are responses to the world, but they acknowledge that we need an understanding of language use in order to have explicit knowledge of how things are and of the contents of those mental states. The very simple thought is that language users, among other things, make utterances which make claims about how things are. If one can come to understand what has being claimed, one is in a position to understand how things might be in the world. In addition, if one can make sense of somebody thinking that the world is that way, one can make sense of them as believing that things are that way. One ends up with the potential for knowledge of how things are, and the potential for knowledge of what people believe. It is not difficult to extend the picture to include other propositional attitudes.

However, these views deny that understanding an utterance is a matter of coming to understand something that would be meaningful independently of the occasion of utterance. So, what we cannot do is simply learn a language, where a language is the sort of thing that is meaningful independently of how it is in fact used, and use that to work our way into a theory of mind. But, for the reasons given above, nor can we simply gain a theory of mind and use that to work our way into an understanding of utterances. Instead, on these views, it has to be possible to do both things together. The simple thought is that we are able to recognise linguistic behaviour as being rational. That is, we are able to recognise linguistic behaviour as having a point. The picture is that what we get access to are bits of purposive behaviour. What we are trying to understand is what our interlocutors are up to. In other words, we are trying to understand why they would behave like that. So, making sense of utterances is making sense of utterers. But, the utterance itself does not drop out of the picture. If our interlocutor is a competent speaker, what she will have done is performed a particular

linguistic act. She might, for example, have claimed that there is milk in the fridge by saying, "there is milk in the fridge". In making sense of her, you need to make sense of why she would have claimed that. So, what you need to do is realise that she has made a claim with a particular content. Alternatively, she might ask if there is milk in the fridge by saying, "is there milk in the fridge?". In this case, you need to realise that she has asked a question with a particular content. The same thing goes for other types of linguistic act. In making sense of competent linguistic behaviour you need to make sense of contents being presented with different forces. But, you do that by making sense of why other people might want to do such a thing. In other words, what we are trying to do is interpret each other.

In brief then, here is the problem faced by interpretive theorists. Such a theorist accepts that thinking is a matter of responding to the world. She acknowledges that it is not representational, and so accepts that we do not have explicit knowledge of mentality without learning to use and understand language. However, she is not prepared to think that in the first instance what we understand are languages. Instead, she thinks that what we understand is the point of linguistic behaviour. However, linguistic behaviour is articulate. So, what we need to do is make sense of our ability to come to understand articulate linguistic behaviour by making sense of it as rational behaviour without making reference to our own grasp of mental content. I am going to put the problem like this: how is it that we interpret other people without a grasp of a language or of mental content?

Davidson is someone who takes it that understanding language use, understanding linguistic behaviour, is a matter of interpreting other speakers. Interpreting other speakers is a matter of being able to "give the meaning of an arbitrary utterance by members of a language community" (Davidson, 2001b, pp. 160–161). I am going to focus on Davidson in order to bring out the proposal. I am then going to show how the problems that beset Davidson beset even non-Davidsonians. I am then going to show that the problems Davidson faces are insurmountable.

Because speakers are able to understand almost any utterance produced by their interlocutors, what we need is a way of modelling that competence. The problem is that the competence we are trying to capture is a competence to understand a limitless number of utterances. The thought is that interpreters are able to discern syntactic

structure in the utterances of their interlocutors. This allows them to have a go at assigning semantic values to the parts in order to establish their semantic roles. In other words, they are able to see how the parts of each utterance make a systematic difference to the truth value of the utterance. As a result, a Tarski style theory of truth goes some way to capturing the linguistic competence of speakers.

> Such a theory may be taken as giving an interpretation of each sentence a speaker might utter. To belong to a speech community—to be an interpreter of the speech of others—one needs, in effect, to know such a theory, and to know that it is a theory of the right kind.
>
> (Davidson, 2001b, p. 161)[86]

It is important to note that claiming that such a theory is a model of linguistic competence, rather than an attribution of implicit knowledge. There is no claim that competent speakers know any such theory. As Davidson writes:

> In any case, claims about what would constitute a satisfactory theory are not… claims about the propositional knowledge of an interpreter, nor are they claims about the details of the inner workings of some part of the brain. They are rather claims about what must be said to give a satisfactory description of the competence of the interpreter. *We* cannot describe what an interpreter can do except by appeal to a recursive theory of a certain sort.
>
> (Davidson, 1985, p. 476)

Davidson's talk of a "language community" may make it seem like Davidson thinks that there are languages, where a language is what is spoken by a particular community. There is a sense in which this would be right. However, it is a dull empirical sense[87]. Davidson is aware that people in a similar location tend to exhibit

86 Nb. Davidson's use of "sentence". It is similar to mine except that for Davidson a sentence is a term of art in an empirical theory, whereas for me there are sentences.

87 Davidson writes in "the social aspect of language", "I am happy to say speakers share a language if and only if they tend to use the same words to mean the same thing, and once this idea is properly tidied up it is only a short, uninteresting step to defining the predicate 'is a language' in a way that corresponds, as nearly as may be, with ordinary usage. What bothers Michael [Dummett] is not my failure to take this step (somewhere I do take it), but my failure to appreciate that the concept of a speaker meaning something by what he says depends on the notion of a shared language and not the other way round" (Davidson, 1994, p. 3). Davidson does not accept Dummett's criticism. He remains wedded to the idea that the interest in truth conditional theories of meaning are as theories of interpretation of people, not as descriptions of languages.

similar linguistic behaviour. He is also aware that as a matter of fact it is quite difficult to understand people who do not behave like you. Interpreting other people's linguistic behaviour is not easy. It cannot be done on a piecemeal, utterance by utterance basis. This is because one makes sense of an utterance by making sense of why somebody would say that. This requires you to know an awful lot about her. You do not need to know everything that she thinks. But, you do need to know a lot about what concepts she possesses, and knowing what concepts she possesses is a matter of knowing which inferences she would be prepared to make given a set of background beliefs and desires. However, knowing what inferences somebody would be prepared to make is a matter of knowing what they take to follow from what. But, because we have no language independent access to the contents of their mental states, that is a matter of being able to assign truth conditions to their utterances. So, what Davidson hopes to model is the kind of skill possessed by people who are able to understand each other effortlessly, and that is the skill possessed by people who know a lot about each other's conceptual repertoire. As it happens, that is going to be a model of what people who share patterns of linguistic behaviour are able to do. He is quite happy to talk about people in that position as sharing a language or as belonging to a single language community. It does not follow that what these people understand is a shared language in any interesting philosophical sense.

Davidson's view is that we come to the interpretive encounter primed with what Davidson labels a "prior theory" (Davidson, 1985, p. 479). A prior theory is a theory of how somebody is likely to speak and what their utterances are likely to mean. But, the speaker may confound expectations. This might be deliberate, as in the case of a witticism, or accidental, as in the case of a slip of the tongue. If interpretation is to be successful, the interpreter cannot simply plug the utterances into her prior theory to get an interpretation out. Instead, she has to on-the-fly work out what her interlocutor has said. As Davidson points out, the theory which correctly models what somebody who said might turn out to be different from the prior theory. He labels it the "passing theory" (Davidson, 1985, p. 480).

> A passing theory is not a theory of what anyone (except perhaps a philosopher) would call an actual natural language. 'Mastery' of such a language would be useless, since knowing a passing theory is only knowing how to interpret a particular utterance on a particular occasion. Nor could such a language, if you want to call it that, be said to have

> been learned, or to be governed by conventions. Of course things previously learned were essential to arriving at the passing theory, but what was learned could not have been the passing theory.
>
> (Davidson, 1985, p. 480)

So, on Davidson's view, what models interpretation is a theory of truth that gives the content of a particular utterance, by a particular speaker at a particular time. This is the passing theory. It is true that in order to be able to be able to interpret, you need to know a lot about your interlocutor. In particular, you have to have a pretty good idea about what she might be likely to mean by an utterance at any given time. That competence is modelled by another theory of truth. This is the prior theory. But, it is not the theory of truth that gives the content of what she actually says. In other words, we have to be able to interpret a particular speaker's particular utterance. As Davidson points out in "The Social Aspect of Meaning", the view commits us to thinking that sharing a repertoire of words and syntactic devices which you have learned to employ in similar ways is not sufficient to explain interpretation, and furthermore, it is not even necessary (Davidson, 1994, p. 2).

Davidson's use of the word "interpretation" is particularly apt. For Davidson, an interpretation is a matter of assigning values to the semantically relevant parts of a person's speech. To do that the interpreter must be able to analyse the linguistic behaviour into its syntactic elements and then assign values. Given the compositional nature of human speech, assigning values requires the ability to assign values to a stock of semantic primitives, and then develop a theory that recursively assigns values to all other semantic elements. By making the central semantic value truth, Davidson makes coming to understand another person's speech just like providing an interpretation of an artificial language.

Importantly, the difference between interpreting another's speech and providing an interpretation of a formal language is that the former is an empirical matter and the latter stipulative. The picture is that an interpreter tries out a variety of interpretations until she lands upon one that more or less gets things right. The basic data of such a theory are which sentences the subject holds true. Knowing that a speaker is committed to a particular piece of uninterpreted speech is not by itself very helpful. The interpreter has no idea what values should be assigned to the words used. The way in is to see

language use as intentional actions on the part of speakers. The interpreter makes sense of what might be held true by making sense of the behaviour of her subject. This is where the principle of charity comes into play. It is both the working assumption and a prerequisite of the possibility of interpretation that the subject is not hopelessly irrational. You have to interpret your interlocutors according to the way the world strikes you, and it is a precondition of interpretability that your subject is rational. As Davidson puts it,

> No simple theory can put a speaker and interpreter in perfect agreement, and so a workable theory must from time to time assume error on the part of one or the other. The basic methodological precept is, therefore, that a good theory of interpretation maximizes agreement. Or, given that sentences are infinite in number, and given further considerations to come, a better word might be *optimize*.
>
> (Davidson, 2001b, p. 169 italics original)

Davidson goes on to observe that on this picture, "the concepts of objective truth, and of error, necessarily emerge in the context of interpretation" (Davidson, 2001b, p. 169). The thought being that truth is a property of interpreted sentences. On some interpretations, a sentence is true. If someone gives it one of those interpretations, and holds the sentence under that interpretation to be true, she has got things right, otherwise she is in error. In this respect Davidson treats truth as a semantic value.

However, Davidson also thinks that getting the concept of truth brings with it the concept of belief, and with it the more general concept of a thought. As he writes:

> Since the attitude of holding true is the same, whether the sentence is true or not, it corresponds directly to belief. The concept of belief thus stands ready to take up the slack between objective truth and the held true, and we come to understand it just in this connection.
>
> We have the idea of belief only from the role of belief in the interpretation of language, for as a private attitude it is not intelligible except as an adjustment to the public norm provided by language. It follows that a creature must be a member of a speech community if it is to have the concept of belief. And given the dependence of other attitudes on belief, we can say more generally that only a creature that can interpret speech can have the concept of a thought.
>
> (Davidson, 2001b, p. 170)

The idea is that prior to trying to interpret others we never notice that we are in

error, because the only norms by which to judge our judgements would be our own judgements[88]. That makes no sense, and it is only when we encounter others that we notice that there are differences of opinion. More specifically, we get the notion of error when we notice that people do not hold all of the same utterances to be true. So, we get the notion of error from the notion of truth, and truth applies to utterances. Transposed into my idiom what Davidson is saying is that we move to the first floor, we gain explicit knowledge of mental content, by getting the concept of truth as a semantic value of an utterance. It is through interpreting others that we are able to interpret ourselves[89].

3.2 Redundancy Theories

One interesting feature of interpretive theories is that, despite crucial differences, they share a common core with linguistic priority developments of a redundancy theory. A linguistic priority redundancy view seeks to find some account of language use that makes intentionality an intrinsic property of sentences. What is required is an account of language use such that sentences are about the world. On these views, language use gives rise to philosophically interesting systems of meaning. These systems of meaning

88 Whatever the correct analysis of Wittgenstein's private language argument, his comment at §258 "one would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'" is surely correct (Wittgenstein, 1997). There has to be some conception of standards that are independent of my act of judgement, before I can make sense of being in error.

89 Davidson actually goes further; he denies that there is any ground floor thinking at all:

> Can a creature have a belief if it does not have the concept of belief? It seems to me it cannot, and for this reason. Someone cannot have a belief unless he understands the possibility of being mistaken, and this requires grasping the contrast between truth and error—true belief and false belief. But this contrast, I have argued, can emerge only in the context of interpretation, which alone forces us to the idea of an objective, public truth.
>
> Davidson, 2001b, p. 170

I am not sure that belief requires understanding the possibility of being mistaken or that one needs the concept of truth for understanding error. My lab rat understands (implicitly) that it has made a mistake, and plenty of brutes hesitate before rushing in – surely a recognition that they might be wrong. But perhaps Davidson means that a belief must aim at truth, and that is not something that can be done without the concept of truth.

are languages and are taken to be respectable objects rather than theoretical posits used to predict and explain speaker behaviour. Millikan's view, for example, treats words and syntactic devices as historical items. The idea is that they are meaningful because these historical items have proliferated as a result of having served a specific function. The idea then is that this "proper function" – the function that explains the proliferation – of a linguistic device is what any production of a lexical or syntactic item does. However, as Millikan writes:

> But although the stabilizing function of a language device is independent of the purpose of the particular speaker who utters it, it is not independent of speaker purposes in general. The survival of a public language element without change of function must depend upon their being a critical mass of occasions upon which speakers and hearers use the element such that it performs its stabilizing function in accordance with the speaker's and the hearer's purposes.
>
> (Millikan, 1987, pp. 52–53)

Without this thought Millikan's position would be dead in the water. As she rejects what she labels "meaning rationalism" – the view that we can grasp the meaning of the term by a priori reflection – Millikan has to have some account of how we ever came to linguistic understanding. If the meaning of the word is whatever historical feature of its use best explains its proliferation, then grasping meaning requires serious empirical study. One cannot undertake that empirical study until one has some sophisticated, reflective understanding of the world around you. But, the fact that we can and do use words for communicative purposes without reference to, or understanding of, their proper functions suggests that the way in is via learning to interpret others. Once you have worked your way into explicit knowledge, then you can, should you wish, choose to use words and sentences correctly. However, working your way into explicit knowledge is a matter of interpreting the behaviour of other people.

David Lewis is another redundancy theorist. He thinks that languages are conventions for uses of words and sentences. At heart, a convention is a regularity of use. For Lewis, linguistic behaviour is regular enough, and with good reason, that it gives rise to objects for which there is a function from sentences to truth values (albeit that the actual mechanism goes via sets of possible worlds). Although only a tiny handful of speakers ever achieve the sophistication of being able to map sentences to

truth values, most competent speakers do manage to understand the meaning of sentences, and that is to know when they are true and know when they are false. They are then able to use those sentences for their own purposes. However, our way into understanding the meaning of languages is via understanding each other (Lewis, 1979, pp. 562–567).

What links redundancy views with interpretive views is a diehard empiricism. Crucial to all of the views is the rejection of meaning rationalism. Meaning rationalism is the view that a competent speaker can have a priori knowledge of the meaning of her utterances or the contents of her propositional attitudes. Meaning empiricists maintain that it takes empirical work to discover what intentional items are about. As Millikan sees it, the problem that besets traditional correspondence theories of truth come about because the theorist thinks that one could have access to a correspondence theory, as it were, from the inside. Instead, one needs to step back from thought and language to see how utterances and mental states map onto the world. One challenge for the view is showing how one could ever move from the inside position to the outside position to make the required empirical investigations. In response, the position tries to make sense of our ability to make sense of other people. The inside position is the position of an interpreter. A grasp of the skills required for interpretation allows you to investigate the mappings between mental states, uses of sentences and the world. On the diehard empiricist development, that comes out as an empirical hypothesis. It is tacked on to an interpretive theory of understanding.

But, even on an interpretive theory understanding an utterance is a matter of building an empirical theory of what your interlocutor means. The outputs of that theory are statements of what your interlocutor has said. But, the interlocuter's sayings are pieces of behaviour no different in kind from any other intentional actions. The radical interpreter does not try to understand the language of her subject. Instead, she tries to understand the subject himself. As Hornsby puts it:

> An interpretational truth-theory enables one to see speakers' productions of noises as contentful utterances by way of assisting in the task of seeing those productions as intelligible speech actions, having some purpose. But any hypothesis about the purpose of the person who used words on an occasion goes hand-in-hand not only with a hypothesis about the content of her utterance but also with a hypothesis about her mental states. Any such hypothesis is thus potentially confirmable or disconfirmable by reference at least to

> linguistic actions of that person…, and also to actions of any kind of that person on other occasions. We cannot understand people on the basis of what they do with words considered separately from all the other things they and others do. An account of the use of a language is just one part of the total account of the lives and minds of the people who speak it.
>
> (Hornsby, 1989, p. 554)[90]

I am going to show that such empirical theorising about speaker behaviour has to come after understanding a language, and that the possibility of understanding language requires a defence of meaning rationalism.

3.3 The First Objection: No Way In to Reason

I have two objections to treating understanding utterances as a matter of making sense of your interlocutors. The first objection is that it seems impossible for a non-linguistic creature to make sense of its interlocutors as behaving rationally. Prelinguistic creatures can be granted an evaluative world view. That is, they want certain state of affairs and they have some conception as to how things are and how to go about achieving their goals. What they do not have is the concept of truth. They do not have the concept of truth because the concept of truth emerges in the activity of making sense of other people. It is the concept that is used to interpret other people. Competent language users are able to make sense of other people because they are able to make sense of what other people hold true and what other people present as true. But, truth is the concept you need in order to be able to do that. Making sense of other people requires recognising that they are rational. So, you get the concept of truth when you are able to recognise that people ought to have a reason for what they do. The problem is seeing how one could ever come to recognise that other people are rational without having the concept of truth. But, how can one have the concept of truth without recognising that other people are rational?

90 Hornsby, unlike Davidson, is prepared to acknowledge a philosophical use for languages. Presumably, she thinks, with Lewis, that a language is something that develops from regularities of use.

Perhaps the thought is like this: first you bimble around the world getting things right for the most part. However, without realising it you are making errors and learning from them. You improve your abilities to bimble around the world. Among the things that you encounter are other people. They too have to be negotiated. They are particularly tricky because they are also trying to negotiate you. Among the things that they do is make sounds. In trying to work them out, you try to work out why they make those sounds. Eventually it dawns on you that they are committed to these sounds. They, of course, are competent speakers and are holding those sounds to be true under a particular interpretation. Eventually, you hit upon this hypothesis. Then you realise that they hold a sentence to be true because that is how they believe things to be. In realising that, you realise that they have a perspective on the world which largely coincides with yours, but that means that you have realised that you have a perspective on the world. That amounts to knowing how the world strikes you. This gives you the tools to utter sounds with a particular interpretation intended, and to engage in argument with other people. Without sentences being representational independently of speaker intentions, you have come to explicit knowledge of the content of your own and others' minds and explicit knowledge of what you and other people are saying.

The reason I think that the picture fails is that I do not think it can make sense of the infant speaker ever coming to the hypothesis, even implicitly, that competent speakers hold a sentence true under a particular interpretation. Doing that requires realising that they, your interlocutors, have a perspective on the world. But, how are you to realise that they have a perspective on the world without the ability to see that they disagree with you? And how are you to see that they disagree with you when you have no conception that you have a perspective on the world? On the Davidsonian picture, I cannot so much as hold a sentence true or become aware that I am believing anything until I have the concept of truth and error. But, that requires I notice that you disagree with me. And noticing disagreement requires recognising that you believe things and that you are rational. Doing that requires the notion of truth and error.

The basic problem is that to get into explicit thought at all the infant has to recognise her interlocutors as rational agents. That is, as having projects and attitudes, and, at the very least explicable according to a constitutive ideal of rationality. In other words, she needs to take her fellow humans to be, by and large, keeping track of the

truth and behaving in ways that are consistent with what is it that they want. She can only do that if she has some conception of their having an evaluative worldview. That is, some conception of them as minded – which is to say, having a more or less stable conception as to how things are, and as having particular desires. That is, she has to notice other humans as sui generis from inanimate objects by being autonomous and having a perspective on how things are. But, doing all that requires noticing that her interlocutor's have beliefs, and that is something that cannot be done without the concept of belief.

Davidson himself makes the following suggestion as to how we get into explicit knowledge:

> The triangle I have described [formed by two agents and the world] stands for the simplest interpersonal situation. In it two (or more) creatures each correlate their own reactions to external phenomena with the reactions of the other. Once these correlations are set up, each creature is in a position to expect the external phenomenon when it perceives the associated reaction of the other. What introduces the possibility of error is the occasional failure of the expectation; the reactions do not correlate.
>
> (Davidson, 2001c, p. 129)

It is certainly the case that if a creature has correlated external phenomena with the reactions of other creatures and those correlations fail, then error has occurred. But, how is the creature to notice that error has occurred? The creature is, roughly, treating everything in the world as causal. It has hypotheses about how other things react to each other and it. It might, for example, have come to the conclusion that unsupported objects fall to earth. One day it encounters a helium balloon gently drifting upwards. It might come to expect that shiny silver objects are liable to float away. The worry is that a prelinguistic infant is never going to be able to notice that people get things wrong because it will treat everything like the helium balloon. In trying to correlate its actions with things in the world and other objects' reactions, it will never notice that some of those objects have purposes.

It might be thought that this still has not created a problem for Davidson. Davidson might reply, but of course, it all comes at once. Getting the concept of truth just gives you the realisation that your interlocutors have projects and attitudes, the

realisation that you have projects and attitudes, the notion of a perspective of the world, and the idea that people say things to each other by using sentences. However, this would be to treat the problem as to how it is that the infant comes to notice that people are holding utterances true. The objection starts earlier. The problem is that the infant can only ask, "why does my father make those sounds?" looking for a causal explanation. The infant can drop her spoon to see if it falls to the floor to try to work out how gravity works, and prod her father to see how he reacts. What his projects are cannot become a problem for her until she has a perception of him having a mind. That requires her to have a conception of him holding something true, but she cannot get to that conception until she has a notion of him as rational. As a result, on the Davidsonian picture, she needs another way in to the concept of rationality than coming to make sense of other people. She in fact already needs the concept of wants and beliefs, and that requires the untenable thought priority thesis.

I think there is a possible line of response, although it is a little bit desperate. The thought might be that we have evolved to be the sort of creature that looks for teleological explanations. If so our proto-thoughts about other objects in the world are not in terms of their causal powers, but in terms of their projects. The infant who encounters the helium balloon does think of the helium balloon as trying to move upwards, it also assumes that most objects are trying to move downwards. Of course, it is not literally true to say that the pre-linguistic creature thinks of object as trying to do things. That would involve the creature having a full-blown conception of mindedness. But, it is also not literally true to say that the rat thought that unsupported objects fell to earth. In order for the rat to think that it would need the concept of the cause. It quite clearly does not have that. The thought would be that in both cases we have to appeal to a proto-concept. The next claim would be that there is nothing more mysterious about having a proto-concept of a purpose than having a proto-concept of a cause. The final step is to say that at some point, humans, and humans alone, manage to hit upon the hypothesis that speakers are holding things to be true. Humans are able to do that because they come to recognise that people have the purpose of presenting utterances as true. Once they have they have a genuine, if confused, concepts of having a purpose, reason, error and everything else required for recognising perspectives on the world. All that remains is to sharpen up those concepts.

I think this line of response is a little bit desperate because we can say what it is for a rat to have the proto-concept of a cause. It is simply for the rat to expect things, for example, to fall to earth when unsupported or move when pushed. It is not so obvious what it would be for it to have the proto-concept of a purpose. Having said that, it is common for adult humans to attribute purposes to inanimate objects (even when we know full well that they do not). So, that might count as evidence that we are hardwired to expect things to have a will. However, I have another, and I think deeper, objection. It is to that which I now turn.

3.4 The Second Objection: Still No Way Off The Ground Floor

There is a decisive objection. It is that without our first understanding being understanding of sentences considered as speaker independent objects, there is no way off the ground floor. In brief, the problem is that interpretational theories of meaning are models of what speakers do when they understand each other. They do not in fact provide an interpretation of one language in another language. This creates a mystery about what is understood on the right-hand side of the theorems. The point can be seen this way: the theorist who is describing the process of interpretation of one speaker by another produces a recursive theory of truth. That theory is in the 'language' of the theorist. When she says, "'there is milk in the fridge' is true if and only if there is milk in the fridge", she says something in her 'language' that models the understanding of her subject. The sentence used on the right-hand side of the biconditional is a sentence which the theorist understands and knows to capture what is understood by her subject. The problem is making sense of the theorist as having explicit understanding. However, what the theorist does is just a more sophisticated version of what we do all the time when we understand each other. So, if the theorist has no explicit understanding then nor do we. I take it that that is hopeless.

The argument in his briefest form looks like this:

D1. Understanding is a vulnerable state; it could have been wrong.

D2. To have explicit knowledge of something requires understanding a representation of that thing.

D3. Explicit knowledge of something requires the possibility of being

wrong in your understanding of a representation of it.

D4. On Davidson's view of language there is no possibility of misunderstanding a representation.

Therefore,

D5. On Davidson's view of of language there is no explicit knowledge.

D1. Understanding is a vulnerable state; it could have been wrong.

To understand something, for example that there is milk in the fridge, is to be in a state of awareness about how things are – in this case, that there is milk in the fridge. That is to be in a state with a particular content. To have content, as I showed in chapter 1, is to have truth conditions. But, the moral of the previous chapter is that having truth conditions is, at the very least, a matter of intrinsic intentionality. We need an account of content that thereby explains intentionality. In other words, understanding something is a matter of taking the world to be some particular way. Understanding is a factive state. Somebody who understands that there is milk in the fridge has recognised a fact. But, this is a cognitive achievement. It requires having correctly taken the world to be such that there is milk in the fridge. It is the notion of taking that is crucial. The reason that we can evaluate some takings as correct is that all takings are conjectures as to how things might be. And, a conjecture is the sort of thing that can be wrong. So, understanding is a vulnerable state; it could be wrong. Davidson is quite right in the quote above (2001b, p. 170) when he remarks that the concept of belief takes up the slack between the objectively true and the held true[91].

D2. To have explicit knowledge of something requires understanding a representation of that thing.

I showed in the previous chapter that having explicit knowledge of meaning or mental content requires a grasp of the substantial, intrinsic intentional properties of

91 I also think he is right to think that only the concept of truth can make sense of the intentionality of mental states. But, that claim is not required for this part of the argument to go through. All that is required is some account of the vulnerability of states of understanding. That requires some account of why they are evaluable with respect to how things are.

sentences and thoughts. In section 3 of this chapter I showed that even having fully fledged rational responses to situations in the world was not sufficient to have explicit knowledge of how things are. Even if we think of being minded as the rational deployment of concepts in judgements that are aiming at truth, thinking is going on at the ground floor. It remains a practical skill. It is the rational ability to navigate one's environment. That has to be understood as being able, when things go well, to respond correctly to how things are, but it does not give you explicit knowledge. So what does? The simple thought is that if you can understand a representation of something, then you will be able to have explicit knowledge of that thing. I am going to flesh out that simple thought.

A representation of, for example, a situation, that there is milk in the fridge, is the sort of thing can be judged to be true. But, representations are intentional items; they are the sort of things that can be evaluated as true or false. I showed in the previous section that sentences are representational, and thoughts are not. The thought being that sentences make a difference to the life of a thinker by being understood, whereas thoughts make a difference by being had. As a result, sentences can be used to make claims about the world, whereas thoughts occur as the contents of judgements. A claim about the world is distinctive in that it says that such and such a situation is the case, or, as one might say it claims that something is true. But, just as we can make the semantic ascent, we can make the semantic decent. Grasping truth as a device of disquotation is to recognise that when you disquote, the sentence which remains makes a substantial claim about the world. The thought is that to recognise that you have a device of disquotation is to recognise that sentences are about the world. So, somebody who has grasped truth is somebody who has grasped that sentences represent ways for things to be. As a result, gaining understanding of what a sentence means is also gaining explicit knowledge of how things might be in the world. Thus, having explicit knowledge of the representational nature of sentences gives you explicit knowledge of how things might be in the world, and, as there is no other way to gain explicit knowledge, explicit knowledge of how things might be in the world requires understanding a representation of that thing.

D3. Explicit knowledge of something requires the possibility of being wrong in

your understanding of a representation of it.

D3 follows immediately from D1 and D2, but it is important so I am going to say a little bit about it. D3 shows that truth is not merely a device of disquotation. What is understood when you understand a sentence is not the legitimacy of the inference from 'S is true' to the use of the sentence which gives its truth conditions. Instead, what you understand is what it would be for S to be true. Nothing less will do. This is, in a nutshell, the objection against minimalism. But, now note, this is substantial knowledge. To make a claim about the truth conditions of a sentence is to make a risky claim. It is precisely the sort of thing that you could be wrong about. So, explicit knowledge of how things are requires the possibility of going wrong in the way you represent it not just because you are confused about what is in front of you, but because you are confused about the right thing to say about it. In the latter scenario you might be able to recognise and respond to what is in front of you, but be unable to talk about it.

D4. On Davidson's view of language there is no possibility of misunderstanding a representation.

An interpretive theory of truth bears several similarities to minimalism. The chief similarity is that both theories take it that utterances are meaningful. If one had access to the meanings of a language, a Tarski style theory of truth would serve as a definition of truth for that language. It follows that when it comes to truth *tout court*, rather than true-in-English or true-in-Ndebele, it is the operator locution that does the work. An English sentence, S, that can be used to assert that p, according to these views, is true because it is true that p. In other words, the truth of S is a matter of S meaning that p whilst p. However, there is a crucial difference between minimalism and interpretive theories. According to the minimalist, there is no real interest in building a Tarski style theory of truth; according to the interpretive theorist there is. She claims that we have no access to the meaning of sentences, and so we cannot simply define a truth predicate for a language. Instead, the attempt to define the truth predicate is an attempt to interpret the language. The idea is that we discover what people mean by discovering what they hold true. As Hornsby puts it:

> As we saw, an interpretive account of a particular language L contains a definition of truth in L which speaks to *potential* uses of the sentences of L – to what would be said if one were used by an L-speaker. Within such an account, we find, for instance 'sentence that *s* is true in L iff *p*'; and where this assists in interpretation, the place of '*p*' is taken by a sentence in a theorist's language, fitted for the expression of the thinkable that a speaker would express if, as a speaker of L, she used the sentence *s*.
>
> (Hornsby, 1997, p. 19)

So, unlike the minimalist, the interpretive theorist thinks that truth has its use in making sense of what people mean by the words that they use, and, by extension what they think. Unlike the minimalist, the interpretive theorist maintains that there are substantial intentional properties of utterances and mental states; truth is the property that is used to make sense of those. A theory of truth as an account of the semantics of a language makes substantial and interesting claims about the relation between words and the world. However, I am going to show that this benefit of the theory is illusionary, as we have no way of understanding such a theory.

The crucial problem with an interpretive theory arises because it denies there are languages (a problem Hornsby obscures by talk of "speakers of L"). To understand somebody's utterance of "there is milk in the fridge" you need to find an utterance of your own that says the same thing. But, because of the meaning empiricism, this is an empirical matter. As I showed above, the constraint here is the principle of charity; you are trying to make sense of what somebody might be doing, and you do that by trying to make them make sense. You make them make sense by, roughly, interpreting then in such a way that what they do is consistent with them being rational. Somebody comes out as rational, when we are able to make sense of her as updating her beliefs according to the way the world strikes her. So, somebody comes out as rational when her errors are explicable. The normal case will be the one in which somebody comes out as having largely true beliefs[92]. Now, nobody can claim a monopoly on how things are. We can be confident that we have good epistemic access to the facts, but we cannot guarantee of any particular belief that it is true. Of course, we would not believe it if we did not think

92 Annoyingly, being rational is not as simple as having largely true beliefs because of bizarre possibilities like this one: imagine somebody with a deep, unshakeable but incorrect conviction that the fact that something looks true to them is an excellent reason to accept its negation. The paranoid exemplar is going to largely have false beliefs, and spend a lot of time falling into ditches.

that it was. So, in making sense of what other people hold true, you have to interpret them according to your own lights.

The resultant interpretations are T-sentences. These are sentences like "'there is milk in the fridge' is true if and only if there is milk in the fridge". But, if you are to have explicit understanding of those T-sentences, you need access to your own lights. That is, you need to have explicit knowledge of what it is that you have said. However, the meaning of your utterance, the meaning of the right hand side of the T-sentence, is a product of your intention to produce something with just that meaning. The problem is that, as Davidson rightly insists, you do not have access to the content of your own mind through a kind of evidential introspection (Davidson, 2001c, p. 35). As I showed in section 3, even if there is the possibility of thoughts without language, your only access to those thoughts is by representing them in a language. But, for Davidson, because uses of language are bits of intentional behaviour conceptually on a par with all other intentional actions, there is no more to what has been said by a use of language than how it is correctly interpreted. So, to gain explicit knowledge of thought content or meaning you need to be able to adopt the position of interpreter towards your own utterances.

There is something odd about the thought that speakers adopt the position of interpreter with respect to their own utterances. It is the reverse of the thought that the speaker must first form an intention to say something, and then find a way of putting it into words. And, of course, that is not what Davidson thinks. Instead, using language, like all other intentional behaviour is a response to the world. Somebody who goes to the fridge to take the milk out of it is somebody who believes that there is milk in the fridge, and somebody who utters "there is milk in the fridge" in response to a query about its location is somebody who believes that the utterance claims that there is milk in the fridge. And, just as you cannot, in normal circumstances, end up with largely false beliefs, you cannot but end up meaning what you say. So, the T-sentences that a speaker might utter about her own utterances cannot help but end up being true. When she, for example says "'I have arthritis' is is true if and only if I have arthritis", the T-sentence is guaranteed to interpret her utterance. In addition, that is something which the speaker can know a priori about those T-sentences. Indeed, this is part and parcel of coming to realise that she can interpret her own utterances. Once she realises that her utterances

are bits of intentional behaviour, she will realise that sincere assertoric utterances are guaranteed to be expressions of what she believes. Familiarity with devices like "I think that" and "the content of my thought is that" will enable her to realise that claims like "I think that there is milk in the fridge" are also guaranteed to be true. However, as John Campbell complains about this sort of view "all we have is that the representations are, one way or another, being interpreted so that they come out true" (Campbell, 2002, p. 133). This can be hard to see because, unlike on the minimalist view, the T-sentences do make substantial claims about the world. From the third person perspective you have to work quite hard to assign truth-conditions. You can go wrong, realise that you have gone wrong and try again. That perspective is simply not available from the first person perspective. There is no real possibility of the misassignment of truth-conditions. But, as I showed above, explicit knowledge of how things are, requires the possibility of misunderstanding the words that you use. It is only when that is the case that you have access to the content of your thoughts. So, what is required from an adequate account of truth and meaning is the possibility of falsely denying that you have arthritis despite knowing that you have an inflammation of the joints, perhaps because you have not read Davidson and so do not realise that gout is a form of arthritis.

3.5 Redundancy Theories Again

In the next chapter, I am going to sketch out just such an account of truth and meaning. But, before doing that, I need to turn my attention to redundancy theories that allow for linguistic priority. These views allow for the possibility of the first meaning of an utterance being the meaning in a language. On redundancy views, sentences end up having intentional properties because of suitable natural scientifically describable characteristics. What is required is some account of use such that sentences end up with an ersatz version of correct use. A bipartite truth conditional theory of meaning is then a description of these ersatz standards. To discover the meaning of a sentence, one needs to do empirical work into the current and historical uses of these sentences to discover what standards they set. So, these views are also meaning empiricist views, and, as noted above, our way into empirical theorising is through understanding each other.

I am going to focus on Millikan's view to show how the line of objection works.

For Millikan, a sentence is about the world because it is a representation of it, and being a representation is such that gaining information from it requires identifying its semantic value via the semantic values, if any, of its parts (see, for example, 1987, p. 239). So, somebody who understands a sentence must be able to do just that. However, good naturalist that she is, Millikan is not going to allow that understanding the sentence is a matter of having a thought before the mind's eye. Instead, it is to be in a mental state such that one has identified the values of the sentence. That occurs when, on hearing the sentence, one adopts the mental state that is about the same situation the sentence represents, and then enters a new mental state that identifies the mental intentional icon with the sentential intentional icon as being about the same situation. As she writes:

> Speaking now quite generally, in order that a correct act of identification should be performed we need at least *two* intentional icons, one element of each of these icons having the same real value as one of the elements of the other. Then, an act of correct identification is performed by any interpreting device that uses these icons *jointly* in order to perform a proper function where the Normal explanation for proper performance of this function makes reference to the fact that the real value of these two elements *is* the same. That is, the interpreting device will be able to accomplish what good it does Normally only *because* these elements map the same. The act of identifying operates upon as intentional icons. But in so doing it identifies variants in the world.
>
> (Millikan, 1987, p. 242, italics original)

But, an interpreting device that does what good it does by, Normally, identifying one thing as the value of two intentional icons is a device that allows the creature to make practical and theoretical inferences that will, in general, be successful because it has correctly picked out some item in the world as the value of the two icons. It does not output explicit knowledge. What Millikan has accounted for is our practical, ground floor abilities to use and respond to language. To have explicit knowledge the thinker needs to find a sentence that describes what act of identification she has made. Now, presumably, Millikan thinks that there is some evolved structure in the mind which Normally functions to output a sentence that describes the way that things strike you. So, when there is a memory of there being milk in the fridge, this language function, if it has been adapted through living in the south-east of England, outputs "there is milk in

the fridge", in response to tokens of "is there any milk?". The output is a token of English. But, all there is to understanding English is learning to respond to it and getting others to respond to you. That shows, that all there is to speaking a language is the practical capacity to use a language. There is no explicit knowledge of meaning.

But, why couldn't we come to explicit knowledge? Somebody says to you, "there is milk in the fridge". You hear that utterance and are able to go to the fridge to get milk from it. You have correctly identified what the utterance means. When somebody else utters, "is there any milk?" You are able to reply, "there is milk in the fridge." Is that not precisely explicit knowledge of English? If you were to travel to Twin-Earth where fridge like objects hinged to the left were ceremonial receptacles for milk, and fridge like objects hinged the right were fridges, learning Twin-English would be a little trickier than providing a 1-1 mapping from English-English into Twin-English. You would have to find at least two new words, one for the ceremonial milk receptacles and one for the fridges. Does this not show that you are in fact learning a language when you learn to interpret others, and more over, can be wrong about what your own words mean, and thus about what you think?

It does indeed show that you can misunderstand others, but it does not show that you can misunderstand yourself. The new immigrant to twin earth lacks the concept of a ceremonial fridge. She will be confused about why some milk is drinkable and some is taboo. At some stage she will come to recognise the difference between fridges and fridge like religious artifacts. She will start to use the language of her new compatriots. However, at no point can she have explicit knowledge of the meaning of her words. Her utterances on arrival will be false claims in English, but what she will mean by them is just what she thinks they mean. What she thinks they mean will be a matter of the concepts she has developed in her home environment. The longer she spends in her new environment the more reasonable it is to say that her concepts are now concepts of the things around her, and what she means by her words will also be a matter of the things in her environment. But, now she is still right about what she thinks she means by her words. There is no real possibility of her misunderstanding herself. She never gains explicit knowledge of how things are. She just becomes more and more adept at getting round the environment. But, of course, the fact that we can say that about her shows that we do have explicit knowledge. Something has gone wrong with the redundancy view.

§4 Summary and the Way Ahead

In this chapter I looked at a number of different ways of understanding truth in terms of what we do. I started with views that tried to understand truth in terms of the functional organisation of the mind. I showed that even if that functional organisation is described in terms of the 'constitutive ideal of rationality', sentences are no more than indexes of mental states. It becomes impossible to make sense of our explicit knowledge of meaning and content. The basic problem is that there is no epistemic access to thoughts, because thoughts are dependent objects. They are that which, in conjunction with a type of propositional attitude, individuates mental states. They are not objects of awareness. I then turned to views that treat sentences as meaningful, but make their meaning dependent on the ways they are used by speakers. I argued that explicit understanding, like all understanding, is a vulnerable state. There is a cognitive achievement to understanding because it is the sort of state that can be evaluated as correct or incorrect. However, if the meaning of an utterance is a matter of what the utterer means by it, and that is a matter of her mental state, then there is no real possibility of the utterer misunderstanding her utterances. The best that can be said is that we are guaranteed to be right about what we think about ourselves, and, are unlikely to be wrong about what we think about the world. But, this just writes large the fact that we have the abilities to navigate our environment. It does not account for our explicit knowledge of meaning, mental content and how things are in the world. In the next chapter, I am going to vindicate treating truth as a substantial, evaluative property of a speaker independent linguistic practice. The strategy is to show that this is what is required for genuine explicit knowledge of how things are.

Chapter 4

Linguistic Priority

In the last two chapters I looked at views that tried to deny that there was any distinctive rationality to language use or thinking. In chapter 2 I discussed two types of view. The first, minimalism, not only deflates normativity but also deflates intentionality. The second type of view, designation, deflates normativity but leaves intentionality intact. Designation views try to make sense of intentionality in terms of a relation between truth-bearer and truth-maker. I showed that neither view could make sense of our understanding of the rationality of language use or thinking. In the previous chapter I looked at views that made descriptions of the activities of using language or thinking central to their accounts. These views divided between those which try to describe the relevant activity in physical-cum-functional terms and those that attempt to capture the activity by means of idealising explanations. The regulative ideal by which the theorist makes sense of the way the activity proceeds is the constitutive ideal of rationality. The former result in redundancy views of truth, the latter interpretive views. I showed that both types of view, by treating thinking as a matter of responding to the world, require talk of content to be a way of describing the attitudes of a creature. It follows that grasping content requires understanding a linguistic description. As a result, language has that much priority over the mental. I also showed that meaning cannot simply be a matter of whatever is involved in understanding each other's linguistic behaviour. I found two problems with the view. The first is a problem of origin: to understand that people were trying to say anything you would have to understand them as rational, but you cannot understand them as rational until you can understand them as trying to say something. The second problem is that you understand linguistic behaviour according to the way the world strikes you, but you do not have access to the way the world strikes you. Ultimately, you would be left in the dark about what you and other people were thinking and saying.

In this chapter I turn to rational practice views. A rational practice view of language use maintains that a bipartite truth-conditional theory of meaning is a

description of a particular rational practice. It maintains that the expressions of a language are meaningful because there are prescriptive rules which govern the grounds and consequences of different ways of using sentences. The same thing goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for a rational practice view of thought. Such views understand the activity of using a language or the activity of thinking as a matter of taking part in a rule governed practice. The chapter is in three parts. I first complete my defence of the linguistic priority thesis by showing that one cannot make sense of ground floor thinking as a matter of following rules. I then turn to Robert Brandom's pragmatic phenomenalism (Brandom, 1998). Here he takes linguistic practice to be instituted by our deontic attitudes. Brandom maintains that our taking actions to be correct is sufficient to institute a rule governed practice of using a language. Making sense of content is then a matter of making explicit the rules that have been instituted by our attitudes. I show that as, for Brandom, there can be no reason why we adopt the deontic attitudes that we do; Brandom excludes himself from the possibility of explicit knowledge. Finally, I turn to my own simple view of language which is that a bipartite truth conditional theory of meaning for a language is a description of a particular linguistic practice. I show that what it is to be a ground floor speaker is to recognise the procedural reasons generated by the existence of a particular linguistic practice. I then show how we can gain genuine, explicit knowledge of meaning, and thereby thought content, by grasp of truth as a substantial evaluative property of sentences.

§1 Against Mental Priority

I have argued, by a process of elimination, that at least one of the activities of thinking and using a language is a rational practice. Rational practices are, by my definition, rule governed activities. So, there are rules which govern at least one of those two activities. However, to take part in a rational practice requires more than behaviour which is in conformity with the rules. Instead, those rules need to be in force for the practitioners. The prescriptions, prohibitions and permissions provided by the rules of the practice must in some way be recognised by the practitioners. Ground floor language use, on a linguistic priority view, would be a matter of having your linguistic

behaviour governed by the rules of the practice, and explicit knowledge of meaning would be a matter of having a grasp of those rules. The same goes, mutatis mutandis, for a thought priority view. In this section, I am going to show that rules which determine meaning/content cannot be in force for practitioners by guiding their use. I am then going to show that there is an asymmetry between the linguistic case and the mental case. Treating thinking as being constituted by a rational practice requires the rules constitutive of the practice to guide the mental life of thinkers. Because linguistic practice is public and out in the open, this is not the case with a linguistic practice. The rough idea is that the existence of a linguistic practice creates procedural reasons for action which can be recognised as reasons for, say withdrawing an assertion, without any conception that there are rules.

1.1 The Guidance Hypothesis

It is a natural thought that it is a condition of a set of rules being in force for practitioners that the rules are sometimes motivational for the practitioners. Glüer and Wikforss put the point like this:

> What does being 'governed' by a rule R in one's reasoning require? Clearly, it does not require that every single thought or inference be in accordance with R. Nor is mere being in accordance with R sufficient for following R, not even on a regular basis: no matter whether we are concerned with rules for action or rules for reasoning, a distinction between merely regular performance and rule-following is essential in this context.
>
> Intuitively, what is required for following a rule R is that the performances in question can be explained by reference to R… On a very natural reading, this simply means that R plays a role in the motivation S [the subject] has for what she does.
>
> (Glüer and Wikforss, 2009, p. 55)

It would further seem that the potential for motivation by something requires, at the very least, awareness of that thing[93]. It might be thought that in the case of rules it is

93 Glüer and Wikforss, it seems to me, do take it that motivation has to require awareness. The sentence which fills the ellipsis is as follows: "This explanation is available because S herself takes a certain

not just enough to be aware that there is a rule, one also needs to know or have a belief about the content of the rule. For example, if I can follow laws regulating speed limits, then I have to be aware that there are rules which prescribe a certain speed limit. At the very minimum, it looks like I need to be able to make a guess with a definite content, perhaps that the speed limit is not less than 20 miles an hour. Once I have made that guess, I can have a desire to conform to the speed limit, and so the desire to conform to my guess about the content of the rule. I am going to reserve the term "guidance" for behaviour that is motivated in this way. In other words, when I speak of guidance by a rule, I mean to speak of behaviour motivated in part by a subject's thought about the content of a rule.

> **GUIDANCE:** a subject, S, is guided by a rule if and only if S takes the content of the rule to be a reason to conform her behaviour to the rule, and S has an opinion as to the content of the rule[94].

Interestingly, although it seems to be a common assumption that meaning and mental content must be normative, it is not clear to me that anybody has in fact accepted the guidance thesis when it comes to language use or thinking[95]. But, one might reason to it as follows. The problem, as Kripke made clear (Kripke, 1984) is that

attitude to R: S, if you will, accepts a commitment to conform her behaviour to R". I am going to be suggesting that this thought is false.

94 This is not how Dummett uses "guidance". Dummett is quite happy to talk about guidance where rules are in force for a practitioner but the practitioner has no awareness that there are rules. So, for example, in "What Do I Know When I Know a Language?" When discussing somebody who has learnt chess without ever explicitly being introduced to the rules of chess, Dummett writes, "someone who has learned the game in this way could properly be said to know the rules *implicitly*. We might put the point by saying that he does not merely follow the rules, without knowing what he's doing: he is *guided* by them" (Dummett 1993, p. 96, italics original). I think this unfortunate terminology has led to some of the confusion.

95 Paul Boghossian writes: "many writers seem to assume that the connection is straightforward; they may be represented as reasoning as follows. Expressions come to have correctness conditions as the result of people following rules in respect of them; hence, exploring the possibility of correctness is tantamount to exploring the possibility of rule following" (Boghossian 1989, p. 151). The fact that he gives no references to these "many writers" makes me suspect that in fact there is, or was, a general sense in the philosophical ether that the normativity of meaning required guidance by a rule, although nobody was/is brave enough to develop the thesis. It is also possible that Boghossian does not conflate rule following with guidance.

sentences/thoughts have conditions of correct application. These conditions of correct application are infinite. Given that, no list of uses can capture the correctness conditions. Rules are then appealed to in order to describe the correctness conditions. In addition, perhaps as a result of the sort of considerations I have considered in the previous two chapters, those rules are taken to be prescriptive in order to account for why there are correctness conditions at all. If acting in accordance with a prescriptive rule is taken to require guidance, the activities of using a language and thinking are taken to involve being guided by a rule.

Given that I think that nobody has seriously considered the guidance thesis it might be wondered why I am going to dedicate such time to it. There are two reasons for this. One is dialectical. If the guidance thesis goes through, so does a form of mental priority. One simple way to see this is to imagine that a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought provides a description of the rules which guide a thinker. The theory provides an account of the mental roles of thoughts and concepts. But, unlike on the sui generis views considered in the last chapter, individual thinkers have access to these rules – after all, they are being guided by them. So, even if we had to learn a language in order to make explicit those rules, it would make sense to say that truth is primarily a property of thoughts. So, if I can rule out the guidance thesis, I rule out one way of motivating a thought priority thesis. Of course, one might try to show that the rules governing thinking are in force without guiding practitioners, but, their being in force shows that truth is primarily a property of thoughts. So, I also want to try to show that mental rules cannot be in force at all. The second reason is more constructive. It is to get clear about what is involved in following a rule. I think people have thought that given that guidance by a rule is impossible, we need to drop our commitment to the normativity of meaning and content. This is certainly true of Glüer and Wikforss who, after showing that guidance is impossible, conclude that "rules governing reasoning in the required sense seem positively impossible" (Glüer and Wikforss, 2009, p. 64). What I am going to show is that the normativity of meaning or content requires rule governed behaviour, but that does not require guidance by rules. This is a good thing because Glüer and Wikforss are right that guidance is impossible in both the linguistic and the mental case.

1.2 Content Engendered Normativity and Content Determining Normativity

The relationship between rules and normativity is a tricky subject. I want to show that thinking is not taking part in a rational practice. So, I need to show what distinguishes a rational practice view of thinking from a Peacocke style (sui generis) view of thought. To do this I am going to borrow from Glüer and Wikforss. Glüer and Wikforss distinguish between what they call "content engendered normativity" and "content determining normativity" (Glüer and Wikforss 2009, p. 33). Where there is content engendered normativity, there is an ought which follows directly from the content of a propositional attitude. Here is a plausible example: if Aleema entertains the thought that her friend is in France, and her friend is in France, she ought to believe that her friend is in France. Here the content of Aleema's thought, that her friend is in France, is thought to generate an ought, that she, Aleema, should believe just that. Content determining normativity is the view that there is content because there are oughts. As applied to the mental, this is the view that it is the rules which a thinker follows that determine the contents of her thoughts. If content determining normativity is true, you do not have any propositional attitudes unless you are following a set of rules, and, in addition what those propositional attitudes are gets determined by the rules you are following.

A sui generis view of thought holds that mental contents are engendered by the ways that we respond to the world and that there are rational relations between them. Chief among those relations is implication. The view holds that relations cannot be understood in physical-cum-functional terms. Instead, it requires an understanding of implication. To understand the mental one has to understand implication. This is simply the notion of what follows from what. It is very tempting to start introduce normative talk here, and suggest that if P implies Q, then it is correct to infer Q from P. Such talk is not false, but can be misleading. There is nothing, on these views, normative about implication. The behaviour is not correct because it is in accordance with a prescription. It is simply that to infer Q from P when P implies Q is to have behaved rationally. On a sui generis view of thought, to make sense of thinking is to make sense of it as a rational. Doing that is to make sense of mental behaviour as rational or irrational. That there are rational relations between thoughts irrespective of the actual mental behaviour of a thinker means that the actual mental behaviour of a thinker can be described as

rational or irrational. If we want, we can use "correct" as a way of saying, "is the rational action". It does not follow that there are any rules for thinking, except in the sense that descriptive rules are required to capture what follows from what. I take it that I have shown that a sui generis view of thought is incompatible with truth primarily being a property of thoughts.

There is however a problem, which I will return to below, and that is making sense of why there should be rational standards at all. One way of doing that, is to appeal to genuinely prescriptive rules which govern thinking. This treats a theory of thought as a description of the way that an activity should proceed. It provides more than a standard by which we can make sense of mentality. It tells us what ought to be done, what may be done and what ought to be shunned. This is the rational practice view of the mental. It is the view that thinking involves following genuinely prescriptive rules. Treating thinking as a matter of following genuinely prescriptive rules is compatible with both content determining and content engendered normativity. It might be that it is the contents of your mental states which require you or permits you to adopt or drop other mental states. However, such a view is not compatible with truth primarily being a property of mental states. I showed in the previous chapter that we have no access to mental content unmediated by our grasp of language. So, prelinguistic thinking cannot be guided by the normative properties of mental contents. If the guidance hypothesis is going to help the mental priority theorist, she is going to have to try to make sense of the rules as determining content.

1.3 Content Determination and Guidance

It looks implausible that one can be guided by a rule that also determines content. There are a variety of regresses lurking in the area. One regress, due to Brandom (Brandom, 1998, p. 20) is that rules themselves can be applied correctly or incorrectly. But, if applying something correctly is a matter of being guided by a rule, we need to be guided by a further rule for applying the first rule. Of course, the second rule can be applied correctly or incorrectly, which only goes to show that those who are applying it are guided by a further rule. It quite clearly could not be rules all the way down, because it would follow that we could never apply a rule. Another regress

concerns the content of rules. It can be found in Boghossian (Boghossian, 1989, p. 152), and is developed in more detail by Glüer and Wikforss (Glüer and Wikforss, 2009). Rules have contents. It is because, "thou shalt not murder" says something different from, "thou shalt not commit adultery" that they are different rules. If following a rule is a matter of being guided by it, it is the content that is in some sense doing the guiding. As I showed above, that requires having some access to the content of the rule. Thinkers have access to contents by having mental states which themselves will have contents. "On pain of regress, then, it cannot be true that mental expressions [concepts in my terminology] themselves acquire meaning [content in my terminology] as a result of anyone following rules in respect of them" (Boghossian, 1989, p. 152)[96]. It is this regress that I am going to develop. It might be worth noting that although the problem is our access to the content of a rule, those rules are going to be content determining rules.

According to the guidance thesis you cannot put a rule into action unless you have an opinion about what the content of that rule is. So, if a rule is to be action guiding, one must already be in a position to know what it says. Knowing what a rule says, is a matter of understanding its content. If the rules are content determining, the question now is: can we make sense of being able to understand a content that is both content determining and action guiding? It is quite clear that the understanding in question cannot be explicit understanding. This is because the idea was that we make sense of our explicit understanding by making explicit the rule we were already following. One cannot be required to have explicit understanding of the content of a rule in order to follow it at the ground floor. At this point one might be tempted to appeal to implicit understanding. But that cannot help. The implicit understanding which would be required would be implicit *understanding that*. It would be no more than an unconscious version of explicit understanding. On this hypothesis, having thoughts at all is a matter of following rules, and following a rule is a matter of being guided by it. But guidance requires, at the very best, the ability to have a guess at content. Guessing at content requires the ability to form a belief, B_1, about that content. But, if content is determined by the existence of rules, forming a belief requires the ability to follow a rule. So, forming B_1 involves following a rule, R_1, which determines the content of B_1.

96 Boghossian sets up his regress in terms of a language of thought. He claims that this is for ease of formulation, and that nothing hangs on the hypothesis. I think is right to regress can be set up without a language of thought. I am not sure that the language of thought makes for an easier formulation.

Following R_1 requires the ability to have a guess at the content of R_1, or the ability to form a belief, B_2 about that content. Forming B_2 requires following a rule R_2, and we are caught in the eddy of a vicious process. Implicit understanding does not help the guidance theorist avoid the maelstrom.

1.4 Following Without Guidance

Perhaps the problem is with the guidance thesis alone. After all, the guidance thesis is going to ruin the idea that language use is a matter of taking part in a rational practice. If following a rule required being guided by it, then following a linguistic rule would also require access to the content of the rule. Imagine that the following is a rule which is partly constitutive of a linguistic practice:

> **RQ**. If asked whether it is the case that p, one must: answer in the affirmative if and only if it is the case that p.

If somebody is to be guided by RQ, she needs to have a belief about the content of RQ. So, she needs to understand the rule. If that understanding is understanding of the sentence used to express RQ, she must already understand a language to be guided in her linguistic practice. That looks pretty hopeless. However, if that understanding is of something mental, then she needs access to mental content without understanding language. I showed in the previous chapter that such a position was hopeless. Contents are ways of describing mental states. They are not objects of awareness. So, if I am right about the fact that using a language is taking part in a linguistic practice, there must be an account of rule following which does not involve guidance. I think that there is, but it is not available to the thought priority theorist.

I pointed out in the introduction that you could manifest your ability to follow a rule by acknowledging the force of the rule. This could be done by hesitating before breaking it, seeking to make reparations if you break it, correcting the behaviour of others and so on. Dogs which have been trained not to sit on sofas, but readily push their luck when confronted with new sofas or tired owners are dogs that are, when they are being good, following the rule: do not sit on the sofa. If I am right so far, they do not have access to the content of that rule. So they are not being guided by the rule either. However, the rule has created new reasons for action. These reasons are procedural

reasons. Sitting on the sofa is something that the dog is not allowed to do, and it is something that the dog is aware of. So, it does not sit on the sofa. But, that prohibition and the reasons it brings with it are instituted because there are a system of laws which govern the dog's behaviour. The dog needs no conception that there are rules. It merely needs to know what is and is not permitted. The moral is that rules can be in force by creating new procedural reasons for practitioners to respond to. Those reasons will be recognisable as features of the world.

Uses of language are events in the world. They are sometimes made in response to features of the world, and they have consequences which are further events in the world. The infant speaker can recognise a use of language as a response to a situation, and can recognise which responses to that use of language are appropriate. Like the dog, she can do this without being aware that her interlocutors are, sometimes, following rules. She needs no conception that there is a linguistic practice. Her own attempts at language use will, some of the time, be corrected according to the rules of the practice. This will help her learn what is appropriate and what is inappropriate. Importantly, she can do all this by responding to perceptually available features of the world. She does not need any access to mental content. In section 3, I am going to develop this thought in more detail and show how the infant speaker can move from ground floor language use to first floor grasp of meaning.

Could the same thing apply in the realm of the mental? If so, then rules for adopting different propositional attitudes could be in force by creating procedural reasons which thinkers can recognise and respond to. But, how could non-linguistic creatures come to be aware of those procedural reasons? It seems to me that this is a prima facie impossibility. To recognise a procedural reason one needs to recognise a requirement or prohibition. That is one needs to recognise some features of the world as requiring you to behave in a certain way or to refrain from behaving in a certain way. I want to make sense of ground floor thinking (or at least mentality) happening without the infant being trained into thinking. I want to make sense of thinking as being a way of responding to the world. It seems to me that recognising requirements requires training. You cannot know what is required of you without being trained in some way to recognise those requirements. If that is right, no animal is born with mental abilities. They would all need to be trained in some way. This seems to create a serious problem

of origin. Even if that problem could be overcome, or it is denied that one needs training to recognise requirements, the thought priority theorist would still need to make sense of the world appearing to the pre-linguistic instant as requiring her to adopt different propositional attitudes. For example, it would have to appear to her to believe, when her father hove into view, that there is somebody present. That does not look like the sort of requirement she can be aware of until she has the concept of belief. It seems to me that there is no way for mental rules to be in force at the ground floor.

§2 Pragmatic Constitution

In section 1, I argued that pre-linguistic thinking could not be a matter of taking part in a rational practice. The problem is that there is no way that the rules constitutive of the practice could be in force. Combining this with the results of the previous two chapters shows that truth is primarily an evaluative property of sentences. The question that remains is: does truth also account for intentionality? In this section, I focus on Robert Brandom, who has argued that truth is an evaluative property of sentences but that there is no problem of intentionality. I am going to show that this view is incompatible with our explicit knowledge of meaning and thought content.

2.1 Regulism and Regularism

One moral which we can draw from the guidance problem is that for content determining rules to do any work they need to be in force without our having any knowledge, either implicit or explicit, of them. As Glüer and Wikforss put it "after all, CD [content determining] normativity has to back off yet another step [from explicit knowledge]; it not only reckons with necessarily implicit rules, but with rules you cannot even intend to follow" (Glüer and Wikforss, 2009, p. 60). There is a view, developed and defended by Robert Brandom (Brandom, 1998), which, following Glüer and Wikforss yet again, I have labeled "pragmatic phenomenalism". This view attempts to account for our ability to follow rules without having access to the rules themselves.

Brandom's view is developed to avoid the twin pitfalls of what he labels

"regulism" and "regularism". Regulism is the view that:

> Norms just are rules of conduct. Normative assessments of performances are understood as always having the form of assessments of the extent to which those performances accord with some rule. Reference to proprieties of performance is taken as indirect reference to rules, which determine what is proper by explicitly saying what is proper.
>
> (Brandom, 1998, p. 19)

Regularism is the view that "the practices in which norms are implicit are understood simply as regularities of performance" (Brandom, 1998, p. 27).

The problem with regulism is that it seems to invite a regress. As Brandom puts it:

> A rule specifying how something is correctly done (how a word ought to be used, how a piano ought to be tuned) must be applied to particular circumstances, and applying a rule in particular circumstances is essentially something that can be done correctly or incorrectly…
>
> If correctnesses of performance are determined by rules only against the background of correctness of applications of the rule, how are these latter correctnesses to be understood? If the regulist understanding of all norms as rules is right, then applications of the rule should themselves be understood as correct in so far as they accord with some further rule. Only if this is so can the rule-conception play the explanatory role of being the model for understanding *all* norms.
>
> (Brandom, 1998, p. 20, italics original)

The problem with regularism is simple: merely behaving in regular ways is not sufficient for someone to be following rules, at least not in the sense that her behaviour can be said to be rule governed. Mere regularities of behaviour can be captured by descriptive rules, but fitting some generalisation is not sufficient to be taking part in a rational practice.

2.2 Brandom's Regress

On the face of it, Brandom's regress is different from the regress discussed above. I am going to show that in fact it is not. Brandom's regress is presented as applying to following any rule, not just to rules which determine mental content. This

makes it look like Brandom might think that it is impossible to ever comply with a rule by following it. However, if he thought this, he would be wrong. Imagine there is a rule which says that Rosa must return her library books by 25th August. Rosa knows what the rule prescribes and so follows and complies with the rule by handing back her library books on 24th August. Indeed, in this scenario Rosa is even guided by the content of the rule.

The problem is not that it is somehow impossible to comply with rules. Brandom is concerned about the origin of normativity. He wants to know what it is that makes something correct. The regress only gets going when we ask: what is it to apply the rule correctly? The thought is that there has to be something which determines an application of a rule as correct or incorrect; for example, something that would make fining Rosa a correct application of a rule were she not to have handed back her library books by the 25th. If we think that the only thing that can make something correct or incorrect is a rule, then we are in trouble. We need a rule to determine the application of any rule. Of course, that "any rule" applies to rules which determine correct application of rules, and we are locked into an infinite process.

However, why should we be worried about what makes Rosa's action correct with respect to the rule? Rules determine what we must do, can do, or have to refrain from doing. The rules of Rosa's local library determine the date by which Rosa must have handed back her library books. If Rosa understands the regulations from her local library, she knows what the last date is for handing in her library books. If we know what the rule says, we know when it has been followed. There does not need to be any further questions about what makes some action in compliance with the rule and other actions not in compliance with the rule. However, Brandom's problem begins to bite in the context of asking what is it to follow a rule and not merely to behave in accordance with it. Following a rule is something that practitioners must be able to do.

If following a rule involves guidance by that rule, rule following requires that Rosa has access to what the rule says. This is not hard when it comes to Rosa trying to comply with rules governing the return of her library books. She knows what the rule says, and so she knows how to comply with it. The rule can straightforwardly guide her in some of her interactions with the local library. However, when those rules determine content things are not so straightforward. Rosa cannot already know what the contents

of the rules which determine the contents of her thoughts are. It is here that the problem with correct application arises. Knowing, implicitly or explicitly, the content of a rule is a matter of knowing how it is correctly applied. And now Brandom has his regress. It cannot be that Rosa explicitly knows the content of content determining rules. But, how can she implicitly know that contents are correctly applied one way but not another? Knowledge of what a rule allows, prohibits or enforces requires knowledge of what it says. Implicit knowledge cannot be any more than the ability to comply with the rule. But, if we are to avoid regularism, then it looks like we need to appeal to the ability to follow another rule which determines the correct and incorrect application of the first rule. But, it cannot be that following a rule R_0 requires the ability to follow another rule, R_1, because she cannot know what the content of R_1 is, unless she knows how R_1 is correctly applied. Following R_1 requires knowing what the content of R_1 is. Of course, on this hypothesis knowing the content of R_1 is a matter of being able to follow a further rule, R_2. The regress is well under way[97]. Brandom's regress turns out to be a version of the regress I have already considered.

2.3 Pragmatic Phenomenalism

Brandom's solution falls on the regulism side of the problem. He thinks that "norms explicit as rules presuppose norms implicit in practice" (Brandom, 1998, p. 20). The thought is that assessments are made without reference to rules. Rules are a

97 I think that this is the sort of situation that Brandom has in mind. I take it this is why he immediately goes on to introduce Wittgenstein's discussion of interpretation (Brandom, 1998, p. 20). The problem Wittgenstein is discussing at §201 is a problem of knowing what a rule says. He suggests we are tempted by the idea of providing 'interpretations', with an interpretation being understood as something that tells us how to apply a rule. As Wittgenstein points out, any further entity, set of instructions, image or what have you has to be applied correctly. This initiates the infinite process. Wittgenstein remarks that we should think of an interpretation of the rule as an alternative formulation of the rule, and not as a rule for applying it. Given that Brandom links his regress to Wittgenstein's concern about interpretation, it suggests that Brandom is in fact worried about how we can understand a rule. It is that worry that underpins his quest for an account of what it is to be in compliance with a rule. If we can be in compliance with the rule, we need to have some awareness of its normative force. That is why the question, "where does the normative force come from?" becomes pressing. This is how Hattiangadi understands Brandom (see Hattiangadi, 2003, p. 421).

convenient tool we have for making explicit our practices of assessment. Brandom writes:

> The direction of explanation to be pursued here first offers an account of the practical attitude of taking something to be correct-according-to-a-practice, and then explains the status of being correct-according-to-a-practice by appeal to those attitudes...
>
> Another central explanatory criterion of adequacy for such a conception of implicit practical normative knowing-how is that it be possible in terms of it to understand explicit knowing-that. The effect is to reverse the regulist-intellectualist order of explanation. The regulist starts with a notion of norms explicit in principles and is obliged then to develop an account of what it would be for such things to be implicit in practices. The pragmatist starts rather with a notion of norms implicit in practice and is obliged then to develop an account of what it would be for such things to become propositionally explicit, as claims or rules.
>
> (Brandom, 1998, pp. 25–26)

The key claim here is that assessment as correct is prior to being correct.

Before going on to look at why I think Brandom's view fails, I want to note that Brandom is aware of just how difficult the problem is. Brandom presents what he labels the "gerrymandering-of-regularities argument" (Brandom, 1998, p. 29). The problem is that rules make explicit regularities of practices of assessment. But, now we need to know which regularity. The basic problem is that rules have infinite application, whereas practices of assessment are necessarily finite.

> The problem is that any particular set of performances exhibits many regularities. These will agree on the performances that have been produced and differ in their treatment of some possible performances that have not (yet) been produced. A performance can be denominated 'irregular' only with respect to a specified regularity, not *tout court*. Any further performance will count as regular with respect to some of the patterns exhibited by the original set and as irregular with respect to others. For anything one might go on to do, there is some regularity with respect to which it counts as "going on in the same way," continuing the previous pattern... For the simple regularist's identification of impropriety with irregularity to get a grip, it must be supplemented with some way of picking out, as somehow *privileged*, some out of all the regularities exhibited... The simple regularity view offers no suggestions as to how this might be done and therefore does not solve, but merely puts off, the question of how to understand the normative distinction between what is done and what ought to be done.
>
> (Brandom, 1998, p. 29)

Hattiangadi sums up Brandom rather nicely when she writes, "[t]o Brandom,

Wittgenstein's problem suggests the need for a pragmatic conception of rules as implicit in practice, yet one that treats normative vocabulary as irreducible to naturalistic terms" (Hattiangadi, 2003, p. 423). How does Brandom think he can do that? The answer is Brandom's deontic scorekeeping model. This is a model which treats evaluations as always part of an evaluative practice. The important point is that practices are public. They require a variety of practitioners taking part. Each participant has a deontic status. Deontic status is cashed out in terms of what commitments a practitioner has undertaken and what entitlements she has (some of those entitlements will be earned and some come for free). But, the pragmatism, the pragmatic phenomenalism, comes in because having a deontic status is a matter of the deontic attitudes of the practitioners. This is the scorekeeping. Practitioners keep track of commitments and attribute entitlements by adopting a deontic attitude to their fellow practitioners (and themselves). That deontic attitude is treating someone as committed or entitled. Importantly, adopting a deontic attitude is a practical matter. It has effects on the rest of the practice.

2.4 Has Brandom Merely Postponed the Problem?

The problem is making sense of what it is to adopt a deontic attitude. As Glüer and Wikforss point out, adopting a deontic attitude is something that can be done correctly or incorrectly, and that makes it seem as if it reintroduces the problem of regress and gerrymandering. Glüer and Wikforss argue that it indeed reintroduces that very problem (Glüer and Wikforss, 2009, pp. 61–62). I am going to explore that issue.

Brandom tries to make sense of adopting a deontic attitude like this:

> Adopting this practical attitude can be explained, to begin with, as consisting in the disposition or willingness to impose sanctions. (Later, in more sophisticated practices, entitlement to such a response, or its propriety, is at issue.) Attributors of these statuses may punish those who act in ways they are not (taken to be) entitled to act, and those who do not act in ways they are (taken to be) committed to act. What counts as punishment may (according to the one who interprets a community as exhibiting practices of this sort) be specifiable in nonnormative terms, such as causing pain or otherwise negatively reinforcing the punished behavior. Or what counts as punishment with respect to a particular practice may be specifiable only in normative terms, by appeal to alterations in deontic status or attitude.
>
> (Brandom, 1998, p. 166)

Hattiangadi, who also discusses this passage, takes it that the Brandom view is that practices of sanction constitute adopting normative attitudes, and that those practices are the beatings over the head with sticks, exclusion or other behaviours specifiable in non-normative terms (Hattiangadi, 2003, pp. 425–426). She writes,

> Brandom's picture is still largely, or perhaps even entirely, founded on dispositions: normative statuses are derivative of normative attitudes, and the latter are explained in terms of responsive discrimination and propensities to impose physical sanction. Since these practices institute conceptual content, the ingredients are all assembled for the explanation of conceptual content.
>
> (Hattiangadi, 2003, p. 426)

This, Hattiangadi points out, raises the gerrymandering objection. No amount of practical, non-normative, behaviour can be sufficient to constitute a norm describable by an explicit rule. When a community, for example, excludes members who do not share toys that behaviour is compatible with the following two rules:

TR1. You must always share your toys.

TR2. You must always share your toys with Algernon, Ernest, Marmaduke, Percival… (The list being completed by the names of everyone the observer has seen members sharing toys with or being sanctioned for not sharing toys with).

One would like to reply on Brandom's behalf that this is a trivial epistemic problem. It is true that radical interpreters are not going to be able to definitively assign a norm to the community based on their non-normative behaviour. But, that does not mean that there is not a norm implicit in the practice. It all depends on how the practitioners are in fact taking the situation.

The problem with the reply is that the sanctioning behaviour is meant to constitute not just the norm but thought content itself. On Brandom's picture, taking a situation to be a certain way is constituted by adopting a deontic attitude towards it. This is Brandom's pragmatism about meaning and content. An item is meaningful/contentful if and only if it is part of an inferentially articulated network (see, for example, Brandom, 1998, p. 131). But, something is part of an inferentially articulated network is a matter of it being treated as having normative consequences. That is achieved by the adoption of deontic attitudes which attribute deontic statuses to practitioners. Deontic

statuses are the commitments and entitlements to performances which speakers have, gain and lose. Which commitments and which entitlements follow from particular performances determine the contents of practitioners' minds. But those commitments and entitlements are determined by the deontic attitudes of practitioners. They are the attitudes implicit in practice. So, there is no more to the meanings/content of anybody's sentences/thoughts than what is available to a radical interpreter.

However, I think that Hattiangadi has misunderstood Brandom. She treats Brandom as being a dispositionalist at heart. Hattiangadi's Brandom requires non-normative sanctioning, beatings with sticks, to institute normative sanctioning. I think this misses Brandom's insistence that things are normative all the way down[98]. In the quote from page 166 Brandom suggests that beating with sticks is just one way of sanctioning behaviour. Another way is change in deontic score. That does not need to be explained in terms of any non-normative behaviour. It is simply a matter of how practitioners keep track of commitments and entitlements. Some changes in deontic score permit beating with sticks. Some changes will only have normative consequences. What is made explicit in rules are the ways the practitioners keep track of commitment and entitlements, not the ways practitioners reward and punish each other.

However, keeping track of deontic score can be done correctly or incorrectly. It cannot be that whatever score keepers do is correct. Doing that would just make a mockery of the idea that people are keeping track of deontic score. Deontic scorekeeping at least has to look like it is guided by a prescriptive rule, but if there is no possibility of failure, there is merely a complex descriptive rule that captures all performances past, present and future. So, what Brandom needs is an account of what it is to keep track of deontic score correctly, where that "correctly" is understood in a full blooded normative sense. In other words, as Rosen puts it:

> E is correct (permissible, etc.) iff E is correctly taken to be correct (permissible, etc.),
>
> (Rosen, 1997, p. 167)

and Brandom needs an account of that.

There is a further important constraint here, and that is "correctly taken to be

98 Hattiangadi is alert to this reading (see, for example, Hattiangadi, 2003, p. 425 & p. 427). She thinks making Brandom a dispositionalist at heart is the most plausible reading available. I suspect Hattiangadi thinks that Brandom is both confused and inconsistent.

correct" has to be instituted by our attitudes. It cannot be by appeal either to some normative fact or to some prior rule. This is not just a quirk of Brandom's project stemming from his suspicion of normative facts. It is the whole raison d'être true of pragmatic phenomenalism. We are looking for an account of what it is to follow a rule. The thought was that the existence of rules might have been helpful in explaining rule following as long as we could make sense of being guided by a rule. It turns out that guidance is just not possible, at least for rules which are constitutive of content. Following Brandom, we try to account for rule following in terms of the prior notion of a normative attitude, but that involves making sense of correctly taking a performance to be correct. Of course, we now need an account of what it is to correctly take a performance to be correct. The thought might be that what it is to correctly take a performance to be correct is for the attitude of correctly taking a performance to be correct to be correct; and for that attitude to be correct, if and only if that is correctly taken as correct; and so on for all attitudes. The next move would be to try to show that that regress is not vicious[99]. But, even if that could be achieved, it does not help matters.

> It is true that for any given normative fact, the regress permits us to cite another fact in virtue of which it obtains. But at no stage is this further fact one that is in any clear sense of our making. The regress provides no insight in to how anything we do determines what is correct according to the norms implicit in our practices. Here it suffices to note that even after the regress has been made fully explicit, it makes sense to suppose that each and every one of our actual assessments is in fact incorrect. It is compatible with (3) [the principle cited above] that all of the norms governing our performances and their assessment have been imposed by an inscrutable God, and that our best guesses about where to draw the lines are systematically false to the normative facts.
>
> (Gideon Rosen, 1997, p. 168)

A regress, be it ever so benign, does not help account for what it is to follow a rule.

2.5 A Different View of Making it Explicit

It seems to me that what Brandom does, and what is missed by the critics I have been considering is just how serious Brandom is about the phenomenalism. That is, how serious Brandom is about treating what we do as prior to what there is. This explains why Brandom defends a deflationary view of truth and intentionality. For

99 But, see Glüer and Wikforss 2009, 62-63 who argue that the regress is not in any way benign.

phenomenalism, the notion of a fact is a theoretical notion. Facts do not make anything the case. They are appealed to as part of the practice of talking about our practical attitudes. There is a crucial difference between Brandom's deflationary view of truth and Horwich's minimalism, and that is that for Brandom truth is an evaluative notion. In very broad brush strokes, the view is that given the past behaviour of speakers certain linguistic performances are permitted. Producing a particular linguistic performance, then affects what might come next. In Brandom's vocabulary, at each moment there is a particular deontic score, and that score changes each time a new linguistic performance is made. Truth talk is used by practitioners to make explicit the deontic score. Highly reflective speakers will also use truth talk to describe the ways in which they keep score. Of course, we are those speakers and a bipartite truth-conditional theory of meaning is a description of our own scorekeeping practice. However, there is no question of us responding to normative or non-normative facts. Fact talk and world talk are in the same idiom as truth talk. They are part of a description of our attitudes. For example, if you are entitled to a token of "Brandon wrote a book", you are entitled to a token of "it is true that Brandon wrote a book" and "it is a fact that Brandon wrote a book". The latter two utterance types are used to register entitlements. They do so by endorsing the original utterance.

Glüer and Wikforss, Hattiangadi and Rosen are all looking for an account of where normativity comes from. I have been following them in that quest because I am looking for an account of what it is to follow a rule that does not require being guided by it. The critics are looking for some fact that would account for rule following. They see in Brandom a theory that tries to construct that fact out of practical attitudes. Unsurprisingly, they discover that Brandom cannot avoid the twin pitfalls of regress and gerrymandering. This is because any normative account of the normative still has not located normativity, whereas any non-normative reduction will not have the infinitary character required to capture the normative. I think they have been misled by the way that Brandom presents his view. I take it that what Brandom is trying to do is show that there is no requirement to account for the source of normativity[100]. Brandom writes:

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100 The "our" is important. "Making it explicit" opens with the claim that "'[w]e' is said in many ways" (Brandom, 1998, p. 4). I think it is possible to make sense of that opening by seeing the book as a quest, not to find the normative, but to make sense of who can be called "we". The answer is those we can make sense of, which comes to the same thing as those we can dispute with. The class of those

> So the theoretical attempt to track down the 'source' of the normative dimension in discourse leads us right back to our own implicitly normative practices. The structure of those practices can be elucidated, but always from within normative space, from within our normative practices of giving and asking for reasons. That is the project that has been pursued in this work. Its aim is not reductive but expressive: making explicit the implicit structure characteristic of discursive practice as such.
>
> (Brandom, 1998, p. 649)

I think the picture is like this: we do keep track of deontic score. This involves the adopting of normative attitudes to each other's performances. The "we" in question is all language users. The reason that the "we" is language users is that one can only properly adopt a deontic attitude when the question, "is that attitude correct?" is a live question. It becomes a live question as part of the project of making explicit our discursive practices. Making explicit our discursive practices is a question of arguing about the right way to make judgements. Anyone with whom we can argue is someone who we can make sense of, this is because they are somebody who knows what it is to keep deontic score. Those that we cannot argue with do not have a different score keeping practice, they are those that do not have any scorekeeping practices at all. This is not because those we can argue with have access to some set of normative facts, or are following some set of rules. It is because engaging in that sort of argument is what it is to keep deontic score. It does not mean that whatever we think is right is right, rather it means we need to keep arguing about what is right, and part of doing that is making our reasoning explicit in the form of rules. If that is right, Brandom's book is best seen as a piece of critical philosophy. It makes clear to us what we are doing when we make explicit our discursive practices.

2.6 Stuck on the Ground Floor

The question now is: can we make sense of such pragmatic phenomenalism? The answer is no. The problem is that Brandom cannot distinguish between the ground floor and the first level. If that is right, then there is no making explicit, merely more

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we can make sense of is coextensive with the class of those we can dispute with because we can make sense of somebody only when we share a normative practice with her, and we share a normative practice with someone when we are able to argue about the right way of deontic scorekeeping.

and more behaviour. The fundamental performance is making an inference. That is, moving from one token to another. Taking part in a normative practice is being able to regulate one's own and others' inferences. Some of those tokens are linguistic, and I will focus on those for ease of exposition, although the same thing could be said about the mental. In the practices which take place in my vicinity, if somebody says "she is German" they accept a commitment to endorsing "she is European". If you asked me why, I might say "if somebody is German, then she is European". Competence in English entitles one to tokens of that type. If you push me to explain why that is, I might say, "it is because Germany is a country in Europe, and Germans are natives of Germany, whilst Europeans are natives of Europe. So, given the geographical location of Germany, somebody who is native of Germany is somebody who is native of Europe. Therefore, somebody who is German is somebody who is European". If you carry on pushing me, and I have read enough Brandom I might start talking to you about sub-sentential substitutional commitments and entitlements. That reveals that the one thing Brandom cannot do is give you a reason for a particular scorekeeping practice. This is not surprising. It is a direct consequence of the view that assessment as correct is prior to being correct. What I want to show is that there have to be reasons for our evaluations if we are to make sense of our practices of evaluation. Our practices of evaluation are expressions of our explicit knowledge of meaning and thought content. So, if I am right, there have to be reasons for our evaluations if we are to make sense of our explicit knowledge.

In particular, Brandom has precluded talk of truth and representation in any substantial sense from being a reason for saying something. Brandom has a prosentential theory of truth. This treats "...is true" as "as a syncategorematic fragment of prosentences and then understands this new category by semantic analogy to other proforms, in particular to pronouns" (Brandom, 1998, p. 302). The idea is that concatenating "is true" with a device that picks out a sentence forms a prosentence, and prosentences function just like pronouns. That is, prosentences inherit the function of an antecedent sentence to which it anaphorically refers. This is a deflationary theory. As he writes:

> A feature dear to the hearts of the prosententialists is the metaphysical parsimony of the theory. For what in the past were explained as attribution of a special and mysterious property (truth) to equally mysterious bearers of truth (propositions) are exhibited

> instead as uses of grammatical proforms anaphorically referring only to the sentence tokens that are their antecedents
>
> (Brandom, 1998, pp. 302–303).

The attraction of the theory to Brandom is that it allows us to treat taking-true as prior to being true. The fundamental linguistic move, when it comes to truth, is assertion of an atomic sentence. In this context, an atomic sentence is one which contains no sentential connectives, quantifiers or talk of truth. Asserting an atomic sentence is understood as uttering a particular linguistic token in such a way that one lays claim to be entitled to make that performance. So, if I utter, "Tom buys a sink tidy", in the right circumstances, I am laying claim to be entitled to make that performance. If you utter, "what Jacob says is true", your utterance is to be understood as a prosentence. That is, as a 'lazy' way of uttering, "Tom buys a sink tidy". Your uttering, "Tom buys a sink tidy" is endorsing my entitlement to my performance. Truth talk becomes part of the practice of deontic scorekeeping.

The problem is that we are not in a position to say any of this. The basic actions are utterances of sounds and inscriptions of marks. Brandom, like the deflationary theorists I considered in chapter 2, illegitimately helps himself to a vertical dimension of interpretation. Here is an illustration of how he does it. Imagine a particularly dopey group of people. They have a sophisticated linguistic practice, one that includes talk of truth, quantification, anaphoric dependence and a sophisticated semantic vocabulary. In fact, the linguistic practice of this people looks and sounds just like English. The only difference is they never think to enquire what they are up to. They happily sanction each other physically, and normatively without ever taxing themselves about the rationality. In other words, despite the fact that their vocabulary includes words which are direct translation of "refers", "denotes", "satisfies" and so on it never occurs to them that there are any word-world relations. Interestingly, if asked "are their word-world relations?", they would take themselves entitled, and perhaps obliged, to answer, "yes".

Now, along comes an English radical anthropologist. She observes this group of people. She is able to codify and describe their practice (in fact this task is no harder than codifying and describing the practice of English speakers). If she does this correctly, she will have built a Taski style theory of truth for their language which, using Taski's recursive machinery, can correctly assign truth conditions to any sentence in the

language. Both the dopey speakers and the radical anthropologist will endorse the propriety of uttering any of the theorems generated. The difference is that the radical anthropologist makes sense of those theorems as assigning word-world relations.

The question now is, can we make sense of the difference between the radical anthropologist and her dopey subjects? On Brandom's theory the answer is "no". He will say that the dopey subjects were a convenient step in the dialectic. There are no dopey subjects and interpreters, we are all both dopey subject and interpreter. That is what it is to be one of us. But, I think that shows that Brandom has collapsed the distinction between the linguistic and the meta-linguistic. All that remains are bits of linguistic behaviour. That just means we cannot make sense of deontic scorekeeping. It is only from the position of somebody outside of the practice that we can make sense of there being a vertical dimension of propriety. From inside the practice we happily move from one bit of behaviour to another. Intentional vocabulary, like with Horwich, allows us to go on "talking whilst adding a word or two" (Hornsby, 1997, p. 8n).

It might be helpful at this point to contrast Brandom's view of interpretation with Davidson's. I take it that Davidson has a similar view about language use. Language in the end is just so much sound and mark making. However, for Davidson it signifies something because each of us do in fact have beliefs. There is something that counts as 'our lights'. This makes "holding true" a substantial attitude. It is what allows interpretation to get going. Brandom has no such luxury. He wants to say the same thing about the mental as he does about the discursive. We do not have content for mental states prior to mental behaviour. Instead, our minds are organised in a particular way. That is cashed out in terms of the way we are disposed to move (both in a physical sense and in the mental sense). But, that is something that cannot be said unless there is some significance to our language. Brandom's pragmatic phenomenalism might well escape both the regress of rules and the gerrymandering argument, but by collapsing the distinction between the linguistic and the metalinguistic and the distinction between the mental and the meta-mental it fails about as badly as any theory can fail. It makes it impossible to say or think anything.

§3 How Rules Can Govern Behaviour

I have claimed that at least one of thinking and using a language is a rational practice. I have understood a rational practice to be a rule governed activity. Rational practices are activities that agents can engage in because, as agents, they can acknowledge the force of the rules. If one can acknowledge the force of a set of rules, those rules can govern one's behaviour. However, in section 1 of this chapter, I followed Glüer and Wikforss to show that rules which are constitutive of mental content or of meaning are not rules that can guide agents in their thinking or speaking. In section 2, I discussed Brandom's pragmatic phenomenalism about rules. On this view, it is practices all the way down. The idea is that being a speaker and being a thinker is a matter of being able to adopt deontic attitudes to performances. Among those performances are performances which are taken to reflect on the propriety of other performances. But, in reality there is no such distinction between ground level performance and reflective performance. I showed that this precludes us from having explicit knowledge of meaning or of thought content.

In this section I am going to give an account of what it is for rules to be in force for agents. The previous two sections help make it clear what constraints the account is going to have to meet. In the first instance, I need an account of rule governed behaviour that allows for rules to be constitutive of content and, in some sense, motivational of agent practice. In addition, those rules need to be genuinely prescriptive. That is they need to provide a full-blooded notion of correctness. A full-blooded notion of correctness is one where behaviour is correct because it is in compliance with what ought to happen, and not merely in the etiolated sense of 'in line with a description'. The crux of the problem is showing how norms can be implicit in practice. We cannot let a rule guide us unless we know the content of the rule, but nor can we know the content of content engendering rules in advance of being able to follow them. However, rules cannot be implicit in practice simply because of what we do. We need a reason for keeping score the way we keep score, if we are to make sense of making those reasons explicit. What follows is a simple suggestion as to how it is possible to take part in a rational practice.

3.1 Rules Create Reasons

The very simple thought is that rules create reasons. For example, the Bridge rule which prescribes following suit when possible gives South a reason to play her singleton Queen of hearts when East has led a heart. The next simple thought is that practitioners do not need to have any conception that there are rules to be able to respond to the reasons generated. They merely need to be able to recognise and respond to the procedural reasons that the rules institute. So, continuing the previous example, South need have no conception that there are rules governing the play of the cards, she does not even need the conception of a rule. All she needs to be able to do is to recognise and respond to East's lead as a reason to play her singleton queen. The important point is that recognising and responding to reasons is not mere behaviour. As noted in the introduction, recognising and responding to a reason is recognising and responding to an ought. Recognising and responding to oughts is different to being differentially disposed to respond to situations; it is the behaviour of an agent. To respond to a reason is to take the situation in the world to require, recommend or prohibit a particular course of action. However, that does not require any awareness, implicit or explicit, of content. In the Bridge example, South does not need to have any recognition of the content that she should play her Queen. In particular, she does not need a pro-attitude to that content. Instead, recognising and responding to East's play as a reason to play her Queen is something which she can do at the ground floor.

3.2 Making it Explicit

On my view, one can take part in a rule governed activity if one can recognise and respond to the procedural reasons instituted by the rules which govern the activity. If one is recognising and responding to those reasons, then one is following the rules of the activity. On this view, there is no appeal to guidance by the rule or the claim that our practical attitudes are prior to the rules. There are these procedural reasons only because there are rules. But, because the rules are prior to the reasons, on my view, it is possible to move to the first floor. One can gain explicit knowledge of the rules of the practice because one can reflect on the source of reasons one is following. South can ask herself: why should I play my singleton queen? With enough mental sophistication, she is going to be able to formulate the rule which says that players must, where possible, follow

suit.

Dummett has suggested just such a view of language:

> Understanding a language does not amount to knowing anything at all, in the sense of knowing something to be the case: it is simply a practical ability, namely to use the language and to respond appropriately to the utterances of others when couched in it.
>
> (Dummett, 1993, p. 132)

But, for Dummett, that does not preclude language being a rule governed activity. Using a language and responding appropriately to the utterances of others is a matter of recognising the procedural reasons generated by the rules of a particular linguistic practice. Dummett compares this view of linguistic competence with the competence required to solve a Rubik's cube.

> [S]omeone may be able to "see" what rotations are needed to bring one of the small cubes into its correct position on Rubik's cube without disturbing certain others, and yet be unable to explain the principles he follows. What cannot be supposed is that he does not follow a system capable in principle of being codified and so known explicitly.
>
> (Dummett, 1993, p. 133)

The thought is that a particular orientation of the sides of a Rubik's cube provides a reason for making a specific turn. But, there are only these reasons because there are principles which determine the effect of rotating the sides of a Rubik's cube, and, in the context of trying to make uniformly coloured sides, those principles are prescriptive rules. People do not solve Rubik's cube blindly. That is to say they are not merely differentially responsive to the orientation of the cube. They are able to solve the cube when they can respond to the procedural reasons. It is plausible that there are people who have learnt, without being taught, to solve the cube who could not formulate the principles which govern the rotations that they make.

On this view using a language is similar. The rules of a particular linguistic practice determine what one is allowed to say, has to say and is forbidden from saying. In doing so the rules determine procedural reasons. Learning to use a language is learning to recognise and respond to those reasons. For example, it is learning that the fact that Saffron is dancing procedurally prohibits the assertion that she is not dancing. Or, more plausibly, that the fact that Teddy is on the table requires the assertion that

Teddy is on the table in response to the question, "where is Teddy?". The important point is that the rules do not need to guide practitioners, nor in any sense are the rules determined by the scorekeeping practice of practitioners. The practitioners are ultimately responding in the way that they respond because of the existence of the set of rules. This meets Glüer and Wikforss' motivational constraint. The rules are motivational not by providing a content towards which practitioners adopt pro-attitudes. Instead, the rules create a new set of reasons, and those reasons can motivate the behaviour of practitioners. Similarly, it is not that practitioners count things as correct which means that there are rules, practitioners count things as correct because there are rules. However, performances can count as correct and be counted as correct without the practitioners recognising that there are rules. Practitioners can and do keep score simply by scoring according to the rule-instituted procedural reasons. The practice, and thus meaning, is made explicit by formulating the rules which govern the practice.

§4 Linguistic Priority and Explicit Knowledge

One thought that has driven the whole thesis is that given the possibility of theorising about meaning and content it is possible to have explicit knowledge of meaning and content. I have tried to show that this is not a trivial constraint. I have also tried to show that this involves a grasp of truth. So, I need to show that even if it is possible to follow linguistic rules at the ground floor, it would also be possible to have explicit knowledge of meaning. In this section, I am going to show how treating truth as the central semantic value in a theory of meaning allows us to gain explicit knowledge of meaning and content. I am going to show that, because sentences have a syntax, sentences represent how things stand in the world. I am going to show that by grasping the concept of truth as a semantic value of sentences, speakers can understand that sentences represent, how they represent and what they represent. Grasping what a sentence represents also gives the person who grasps it explicit knowledge of how things might be in the world. This allows one to have explicit knowledge of the content of one's thoughts.

4.1 A Sketch of the Practice

In the previous section I suggested that the activity of using a language is taking part in a rational practice. The result is that understanding the meaning of an expression requires understanding the correct use of that expression. However, nothing precludes us from using a substantial notion of truth to capture the correct use of an expression. I showed in chapter 1 that a use of language is an action. I also showed that there is a hypothetical dimension to those actions. The hypothetical dimension is the point of the action. Some examples of the hypothetical dimension are stating information, telling jokes, writing poems, eliciting information and making demands. It is the purpose for which a particular person uses a bit of language. My claim is that there is also a semantic dimension to the use of an expression. This is because the activity of using a language is part of a rule governed rational practice. The existence of that practice is independent of the intentions of language users. The actions described in the semantic dimension are purely linguistic actions. They are what uses of sentences do.

It is important to note that the view implies that there is a sense of "use of language" and of "linguistic act" in which the performance of a linguistic act by a use of language is independent of language users. When I talk about a use of a sentence or a linguistic act, there is no requirement that it has been produced by a language user. When the monkeys with typewriters finally get round to knocking out a masterpiece, that masterpiece will be understandable because it consists of uses of language. The reason for this is that the rules of a linguistic practice determine the linguistic significance of any use of a sentence. It makes a "sentence" simply that which can be used to perform a linguistic act, and it makes a linguistic act that which has a linguistic significance. The significance of a use of a sentence depends in part on the content of that sentence and in part on its force. But, the force and the content of a sentence in use are both constituted by the rules governing language use, and those rules are in force whether or not speakers are complying with them. So, the first sentence of *The Wasteland*, "April is the cruellest month, breeding/ lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/ memory and desire, stirring/ dull roots with spring rain" is an assertion. However, nobody asserts it. It is because the sentence has assertoric force that it is an assertion. At the ground floor, linguistic competence is a matter of learning to use and to respond to sentences correctly, and at the first level, the reflective level, it is grasping the

significance of so doing. Of course, once one has reflective competence you can use all the basic uses of sentences for your own purposes. This will include using assertions to elicit information, and using interrogatives to issue orders. It opens up the possibility of distinguishing speaker meaning from linguistic meaning. My claim is that linguistic meaning is first meaning.

It is important to note that "sentence" has here a technical, non-natural use. Sentences are what make linguistic acts. They also occur as a component of linguistic acts. When a sentence is used as a complete sentence it has a force. Sentences can also be used without any force, for example when they occur as the antecedent of a conditional: "if it rains tomorrow, the game will be called off". A use of language is effected by a use of words, and words do not change their meaning as they occur in sentences with different forces or with no force. For example, "Will it rain tomorrow?" is a sentence with interrogative force. It is the same sentence as "it will rain tomorrow" and the sentence which is the antecedent of the previous conditional. What varies is the force. This is the point that Geach found in Frege (Geach, 1965, p. 449).

I contend that force roughly coincides with grammatical mood. I confess that being a fairly monoglot English speaker I find it difficult to think of sentences in subjunctive, potential or conditional moods as performing different linguistic actions from sentences in the indicative. There is however a simple test. Rational actions may have grounds and will have consequences. Now, linguistic practices determine procedural grounds and consequences for uses of sentences. There is a linguistic practice when there are a set of rules which determine the grounds and the consequences of different linguistic acts. The rationality of these linguistic acts is describable by using a truth predicate. So, there are linguistic actions where there are truth involving rules which govern the performance of those actions. If one could show that there was a difference in the rules which govern the use of sentences in the indicative and sentences in the subjunctive mood, one would have shown that indicative and subjunctive sentences perform different actions. If one could not, then the difference is not in the action that they perform, they are both assertions, but in the way truth values are assigned. On the latter hypothesis, the difference between the subjunctive and the indicative is like the difference between the present and the past. It is equivalent to a difference in tense rather than a difference in force.

Here, repeated but modified into the truth idiom, is my sketch of the rules which govern and determine the performance of different linguistic acts:

ASS1': One should: assert S only if S is true.

ASS2': If S is true, one should: withdraw any assertion that you have made which is incompatible with S.

OPT1': One should: wish for S to be true only if one would like it to be the case that S is true.

OPT2': If one wishes for S to be true, and it is in your power without undue effort, one should: make S true

INT1': One may: ask whether S is true.

INT2': If one has been asked whether S is true, one should: answer in the affirmative only if S is true.

IMP1': One may: order someone to make S true.

IMP2': If one has received an order to make S true, one should: bring it about that S is true.

Given what I have said above about the relation between truth and force, it seems that I should acknowledge that promising is a distinct linguistic action governed by the following rules:

PRM1: one may: promise to make S true.

PRM2: if one has promised to make S true, one should: bring it about that S is true.

I am not committed to these formulations being correct. Nor am I committed to these rules being exhaustive of linguistic practice. Perhaps there are distinct rules governing assertions in different grammatical moods; perhaps there is the linguistic action of making things so. This would be a use of a sentence that had the same grounds as an imperative, but different in that using the sentence makes it true. These rules are presented as tentative. However, for my purposes their correctness and completeness does not matter. I am not trying to give an account of linguistic practice. I am trying to think about the general shape that account of linguistic practice has to take. It is of course important for my purposes that the norms governing assertion are truth norms. I have claimed that are only way into explicit knowledge through gaining a grasp of truth,

and that we do so by seeing how truth functions as a norm of language, and in particular of assertion. I make a defence of this norm below.

My other big concern is that perhaps the linguistic practice is not as hermtically sealed from other concerns as I am making out. As I have it, anyone, at any time, can issue an order. Once an order has been issued, one has to comply. It might be thought that only those in legitimate authority can give orders, and that one should obey only if the consequences of obeying are morally acceptable. Similarly, one might think that you should not wish for destruction or promise to do wrong.

The reason I have removed ethical and practical considerations from my proposed norms is that I think that language use is a rational practice unto itself, and that questions, commands, wishes and so on are distinctively linguistic actions. This to say that someone who grasps the concept of a question or a command has understood a linguistic action. It is not the case that questions, commands, wishes and so on exist outside of language but that we find it convenient to use language to perform the action. Rather, they are linguistic actions that we can, on occasion, find non-linguistic means of carrying out. In addition, I think of that practice as being a self-contained area of human activity. The upshot is that an assertion, a command, a question, request and so are actions governed by procedural norms. Those procedures are captured by linguistic rules. It seems plausible to me that those norms do not involve the wider social and ethical context in which linguistic practice takes place. It is in this respect that talk of a "language game" is apt. The practice consists of a series of possible moves. Those moves are use of sentences. There are a variety of possible types of move available. Each one has different grounds and consequences, but those grounds and consequences are internal to the practice. As a result, a particular use of a sentence makes a particular difference to the state of play in the practice. In a similar way the rules of the game define what different actions are possible, when they are permitted and the consequences of performing them.

It is of course true that non-linguistic creatures can be trained to follow commands. This might make it look like commands, at least, are not, in any essential, way linguistic actions. No doubt some animal training is the result of exploiting Pavlovian conditioning and, thus, not a threat to my view. But this cannot be the whole case. Much animal training involves carrot and stick, it seems plausible that much of the

complex behaviour exhibited is in fact a response to perceived threat or reward. In effect, the animal recognises the command as a hypothetical reason to perform a certain action. However, it seems to me that, for example, dogs go beyond what is given in their training. They come to recognise certain gestures or expressions as procedural reasons to perform the required actions. Does this mean that I have to acknowledge that commands, at least, are not really linguistic actions? I do not think so. It is notable that a verbal expression or gesture is required to command a dog to sit or jump through a hoop. I want to say that such creatures are able to have practical, ground floor responses to simple sentences, but that we cannot credit them with the ability to speak a language, or even linguistic abilities, because the range of sentences they can respond to and the range of responses they can make is much too limited.

Of course, language use is embedded in almost all aspects of our lives. The alternative view is that the procedural rules which govern the practice are such that they will make reference to practical and ethical considerations. Making this sort of modification would not affect the claim that language use is part of a linguistic practice, nor is it incompatible with the claim that questions, commands, assertions and so on are linguistic actions unavailable to creatures without language. It simply makes the practice more complex by imbuing it with non-linguistic considerations. If I were to make such a modification, the rules would look something like this:

ASS1': One should: assert S only if S is true.

ASS2': If S is true, one should: withdraw any assertion incompatible with S.

OPT1': One should: wish for S to be true only if S's being true would not be a bad thing[101]

101 'Bad' is here to be understood in its moral sense. The thought I am trying to capture is that you should not have immoral wishes. The most obvious examples are wishing that unnecessary harm or suffering come to the innocent. However, I do not want to phrase things like that because I think that it is plausible that there are bads which do not involve harm or suffering. Had Narcissus been less beautiful there may have been less suffering for him and for those that saw him. However, it is plausible that beauty is a good in its own right, and so it is better for the world that Narcissus was so gorgeous. Not being a Catholic, I think that Paradise was more than worth the price of an apple, but certainly the knowledge gained by becoming a reflective creature aware of ourselves as a thing in the world has caused pain and suffering. It could even be argued that it is a condition of possibility of pain and suffering being things that matter. Nevertheless, I think it would be an immoral wish to wish that we were as other animals.

OPT2': If one wishes for S to be true, your wish is legitimate, and it is in your power without undue effort, one should: make S true

INT1': One may: ask whether S is true.

INT2': If one has been asked whether S is true, one should: answer in the affirmative only if S is true.

IMP1': If one is in a position of legitimate authority, and S's being true would not be a bad thing one may: order someone to make S true.

IMP2': If one has received an order from a legitimate authority to make S true, and S's being true would not be a bad thing one should: bring it about that S is true.

I prefer not to make such modification because it makes things messy, and I see no reason to embrace the mess. Once practical or ethical considerations are included within the grounds and consequences of particular linguistic acts, there are no good grounds for including some practical and moral considerations but excluding others. For example, it is plausible that having legitimate authority to demand compliance is part of the procedural grounds for issuing an order, but it is less plausible that being tactful is part of the grounds for making an assertion. Nevertheless, in general, one should not make an assertion if doing so will cause offence. However, we cannot simply add an "if tactful" clause to the grounds for making an assertion. There are times when one should be rude. Tact, honesty and deceitfulness are important considerations in choosing to make an assertion, but they do not serve to define what an assertion is. In a similar manner, there are many circumstances in which changing the subject is rude or unhelpful. As I have it, there is no linguistic reason why one cannot change the subject by asking a question unrelated to the topic at hand. However, relevance does not seem to be a procedural problem when it comes to the asking of questions, and there would be something odd about adding an "if relevant" clause to a proposed norm for interrogatory uses. In addition, the scope of the clause would be much too wide. There are times when one should change the subject, perhaps it has gone stale or the conversation is making people uncomfortable. In both the case of an assertion and of a question, it seems plausible that what we have are different ways of using sentences. Those different ways

are determined solely by differences between the way the truth value of the sentence used determines the procedural grounds and consequences of each type of action. Given that those procedures introduce new types of action to the world, the much more important question is: when should we perform those actions, and when should we comply with those procedures?

What about imperatives? Isn't it plausible that the notion of legitimate authority is built into the concept of a command? It seems odd to think that any one can legitimately issue an order, and odd to think that any order requires compliance. However, it should be noted that on my view these are only procedural norms. Evaluation in terms of these rules is of linguistic performance from the perspective linguistic practice. It does not evaluate behaviour from the much more important perspective of correct human conduct. I want to say that it is categorically wrong to issue an order without the requisite authority, in part, because the order procedurally demands compliance. Thus, in issuing an order one lays claim to the right to compliance, and that is to claim the legitimate authority to demand compliance with the order. Similarly, it is wrong to issue an immoral order because the procedural norm is compliance. In issuing an immoral order you are laying an obligation on the one ordered do something wrong. On receiving an immoral order, you should refuse to comply, and, on receiving an order to do something from one who has no authority to command you to do such a thing, you should have no qualms about refusing to comply; all you are doing is shirking a procedural obligation. This is because imperatives require you to do something. The relevant perspectives in considering what course of action to take are firstly ethical considerations and subsequently practical. It does not follow that there are not procedural norms in play. It simply means that the fact that some course of action is correct procedurally does not, automatically, give you a reason to choose that course of action. It does not follow that there are not procedural reasons, and this is shown by the fact that we can evaluate an action from a procedural point of view[102].

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102 If that seems odd, consider a game like chess. The rules of chess provide procedural reasons by which moves can be evaluated. However, when considering what to do the fact that a move is illegitimate does not provide a reason for a player not to make it. The reasons players have for playing legitimately are practical and ethical. If you make illegitimate moves, it is difficult, and at some point impossible, to engage in a game of chess. If you're not going to engage properly, you will let down your opponent. That is not a nice thing to do. When it comes to any practice, practitioners act or

The upshot is that I cannot see a good reason for treating anything other than the truth value of a sentence as determining the linguistic procedures for different linguistic actions. Each action is typed by procedural grounds for making that action and procedural consequences of so doing. Those grounds and consequences are entirely captured in terms of the truth value of the sentences used to perform those actions. The existence of those procedures brings into existence new types of action. Competent language users are then able to use language to perform these actions, and to respond to them. However, what they do with that ability is then up to them. They are responsible for their actions, and so need to ask themselves if, for example, complying with this order or making that assertion is the right thing to do. The key thought here is that the existence of a procedural reason for performing an action is only one consideration among many when considering what you should do. The shoulds which appear in the proposed rules for making language acts are procedural shoulds. When it comes to what you do, what matters is that you do the right thing, not that you get what you want or that you follow procedures. So, the all things considered should which governs your action is always a categorical should.

Why assertion is governed by a truth norm

Treating truth as the norm which governs assertion is controversial, as is treating truth as the norm which governs belief. When it comes to assertion, much ink has been spilled over whether or not the right norm is knowledge or belief (see, for example, Williamson, 2000, chapter 11 for a defence of a knowledge norm and Bach, 2008, p. 77 for a defence of a belief norm). When it comes to belief, the alternative view is that epistemic norms are in play. I have argued that truth is, in the first instance, an evaluative property of uses of sentences, and it is through coming to be able to evaluate language use that we come to explicit knowledge. The simple idea is that, because truth is the substantial property that organises language use by making a difference, in different ways, to the grounds and consequences of performing language acts, we can come to explicit knowledge of meaning through coming to understand what makes different uses of language correct or incorrect. Once we have explicit knowledge of

refrain from acting in accordance with the procedural shoulds of the practice because of practical or ethical considerations.

meaning, we can use that explicit knowledge to give us explicit knowledge of what we think and also of how things are. We gain these latter forms of knowledge by representing, in language, our thinking and the world to ourselves. The result is that my thesis is not effected if belief is governed by epistemic norms. In addition, thinking could still be a rational practice, but one that is not isomorphic to the practice of using a language. If that is the case, then the procedural rules which govern belief are epistemic in nature. The problem for me is the linguistic case. I need to explain why I take the 'belief or knowledge norm' debate to be misguided.

The key thought here is that assertions are linguistic actions. They are not actions that exist independently of linguistic practices. The meaning of a sub-sentential expression is its contribution to the ways in which sentences in which it can occur are correctly used. The practice consists of a series of types of possible moves. Understanding a sentence, on such a view, requires understanding how its parts make a systematic difference to the right ways of using that sentence. This does not require treating mood as a determiner of force. Instead, it requires thinking that the different forces exist because there are rules for making different types of linguistic acts. It also requires thinking that what competent speakers have to do is to get to grips with those rules.

But, why do those rules have to be truth rules? Well, a sentence is meaningful by being a representation of a way for the world to be. To do so, it must divide all possible ways for the world to be into just two classes: the class of situations compatible with the sentence and the class of situations incompatible with the sentence. Somebody who grasps the content of a sentence is somebody who has explicit knowledge of what situation it represents, and that is to grasp that division. In addition, it is to understand that the sentence is true if and only if all actual states of affairs are in the former class. However, to have that understanding is precisely to have an understanding of truth.

I showed in chapter 2 that designation theories of truth are powerless to make sense of that division because they deflate the normativity of meaning. They treat it as a brute fact about a sentence that it picks out a state of affairs. However, on such a view, if we are to have a grasp of which state of affairs a sentence picks out, then false sentences also pick out states of affairs. But, making this move, leads the theorist unable to account for the difference between truth and falsity. It becomes impossible to make

sense of an assertion as presenting a sentence as true because we are unable to distinguish between the states of affairs picked out by true sentences and the states of affairs picked out by false sentences. The difference between a true sentence and a false sentence is in the way that the truth value of the sentence affects the way it should be used. A sentence is meaningful by dividing states of affairs into the two classes mentioned above, but it does that because of the linguistic norms which govern correct use. In particular, it does that because assertions are correct if and only if they are true. It is because truth is an evaluative property of sentences that they are representations. As correct use is captured in terms of truth value, the linguistic norms which govern the practice have to be truth norms.

It might be thought that all I have shown is that the meaning of a sub-sentential expression is its contribution to the way sentences in which it occurs should be used, but that this does not preclude belief or knowledge norms governing correct use. However, this thought is wrong. Grasp of the concept of knowledge requires recognising the difference between how things are and what you are aware of. But, to have a grasp of the concept of how things are is to have a grasp of the concept of truth. So, to have the concept of knowledge is to recognise that there are more truths than those you are aware of. Similarly, the concept of belief, as Davidson puts it, picks up the slack between "objective truth and the held true, and we come to understand it just in this connection" (Davidson 2001b p. 170). We get the concept of belief by recognising that the way things are can be different from the way they strike us. So, we can neither have the concept of knowledge nor the concept of belief without having the concept of truth. But, as having the concept of truth is a matter of understanding that sentences present ways for things to be, we get the concept of truth from coming to explicit knowledge of meaning. Coming to explicit knowledge of meaning is, or so I have argued, a matter of understanding what it is for assertoric uses of sentences to be correct. In particular, it is understanding that the assertoric use divides all ways for the world to be into two classes, those ways for the world to be which, if the world was that way, would make that assertoric use correct, and those ways for the world to be which, if the world was that way, would make that assertoric use incorrect. So, it cannot be that belief or knowledge provides any norm for assertion. If either did, each assertoric use would divide all ways the world to be into the class of ways for the world to be which are

known/believed to be the case and the class which are unknown/not believed to be the case. We could make no sense of the difference between being known/believed and being true. That is to say, we could make no sense of our concepts of knowledge and belief.

Another way of making the same point is as follows. The meaning of a sub-sentential expression is its contribution to the way sentences are correctly used, but the way sentences are correctly used depends in part on how it presents the world to be. Assertoric uses of the sentence are correct when the world is as sentence presents it to be. In other words, assertoric uses of the sentence are correct when the sentence is true. So, at the very least, the meaning of a sub-sentential expression is its contribution to whatever property evaluates assertion, and whatever property evaluates assertion is truth. In addition that property is the property which speakers have to grasp to make sense of meaning, and, to make sense of meaning, speakers need to recognise that sentences divide the world into two classes: those that fit the norm and those that do not. So, if, for example knowledge, were the norm governing assertion, then competent speakers would need to understand that sentences divide the world into the class of situations which are known and the class of unknown sentences. But, as the concept of being known requires recognising the possibility of unknown truths, such understanding would be impossible.

4.2 How Language Works or What Reflective Speakers Need to Know

It is an important, if obvious, point that words, the basic components of a language, are not merely dispositions to respond to reasons. For a start, machines, which do not respond to reasons, produce words. Words are also not the same as what they are about. Combining these two self-evident observations results in the view that learning to use a language is learning to operate with words, and that words are entities which, when combined in the right ways, perform a variety of linguistic acts. Those linguistic acts are about the world. In other words, linguistic practice is representational. The basic move is to combine words into a sentence which represents the world, and then to do something with that representation. For example, a particular use of a sentence might claim that what it represents is true, or demand that the representation be made true.

This may seem trivial. However, in what follows it is important to note that language use is about the world because it is representational. This means that explicit understanding of a linguistic practice is a matter of explicit understanding of a representational practice. Gaining knowledge of meaning is gaining knowledge of what and how words and sentences can be used to represent.

As truth is the value which organises linguistic practice, what reflective speakers and thinkers need to have grasped is what it is for a sentence to have truth as a semantic value. Now, the reason sentences have truth as a semantic value, when they do, is because of the semantic values of the sub-sentential parts. So, what a reflective speaker has to realise is how the sub-sentential parts determine the truth conditions of sentences in which they can occur. But, as I showed in chapter 2, this is not a matter of pairing up expressions with features of the world. Pairing up leads to the problem of the unity of the proposition, onto the problem of false facts and with it the impossibility of accounting for the rationality of linguistic practice. Instead, the semantic value of a sub-sentential part is precisely its contribution to the truth values of sentences in which it can occur. Someone who grasps that is someone who is able to grasp what it is for a sentence to have a truth value, and that is to thereby be able to analyse a sentence into its component parts. They must be able to see how different parts make a different sort of contribution to the truth value of the whole by having different semantic roles.

The basic case is sentences with subject-predicate structure, and here reflective speakers must be able to see how sentences can be analysed into function and argument. They must recognise that the singular term picks out something which can be the argument of a function, the function is determined by the predicate and is a function from object to a truth value. Things get more complicated with more complicated sentences, for example ones involving quantification and truth functional connectives. In the former case, they still need to discern the function argument structure, but this time recognise how bound variables can provide a range of arguments for a function to a truth value. In the latter case, they need to see how truth functions take the truth values of sentences as arguments to yield truth values. This is a long-winded way of saying that they need to understand how it is that language use represents. The next challenge is showing how a speaker could possibly acquire such an ability. It is to this that I now turn.

4.3 Gaining Explicit Knowledge

Now, uses of language are things in the world. This means that they can be represented and talked about. But, this is no more mysterious than talking about anything else in the world. What is required is a way of referring to sentences and words, and a way of predicating things of them. One way English achieves this is by the device of quote naming sentences. In English, the effect of putting quotation marks around a sentence is to refer to that sentence. English then contains a vocabulary for predicating properties of named sentences. Among such vocabulary there is, "is a sentence", "contains words", "is grammatically correct" and, of course, "is true". English also uses quotation marks to refer to sub-sentential expressions. There are examples of that in the previous sentence. It then has a semantic vocabulary which allows for talk about those expressions. This includes phrases such as, "refers to", "denotes", "is true of" and "is true". The upshot is that English is powerful enough to be its own metalanguage. Other languages have similar devices and, consequently, can be their own metalanguage. However, even if another language lacked such vocabulary, there is no reason why it could not develop in such a way that it can become its own metalanguage. That metalanguage will take the form of a theory of truth for the language in question.

A bipartite truth conditional theory of meaning for a language provides a representation of the procedural reasons which govern the activity of using a language. A speaker with practical competence but no explicit knowledge is one who is able to recognise and respond to those procedural reasons. As a result, such a bipartite theory models the practical competence of a ground floor speaker by representing the reasons a ground floor speaker can recognise and respond to. Explicit understanding of meaning requires explicit understanding of the practice of using a language. The practice of using a language is a rational practice. It is what is represented by a bipartite truth conditional theory of meaning for a language. So, somebody who has explicit understanding of meaning is somebody who has the abilities modelled by such a theory and who has the ability to explicitly understand what she does when she uses a language. In addition to the ability to use a language correctly, she has the ability to reflect on the proprieties of

performing different linguistic acts, the ability to assign truth conditions to the sentences of her language and the ability to understand those reflections and assignations. Somebody who is in a position to understand a representation of the rationality of using a language is somebody who has the requisite abilities to be a reflective speaker. And, as the rationality of using a language is represented with a bipartite truth conditional theory of meaning, someone who is in a position to understand such a theory is someone who has explicit knowledge of meaning. The central concept of such a theory is truth. The rest of the vocabulary used in constructing such a theory is understood in terms of truth. So, coming to reflective understanding of linguistic practice is coming to understand how truth organises linguistic practice. I now want to show how that can be achieved.

The very simple thought is that language use is representational, and it is this that allows us to grasp a semantic property of truth. A sentence is about the world by being a representation of it. Having explicit knowledge of meaning requires having explicit knowledge of what situation a sentence is about. That involves two abilities. The first ability is the ability to have an explicit thought about the situation, and the second the ability to have an explicit thought about the sentence. Schematically, one who has explicit knowledge of meaning has to be able to explicitly think that:

S is about p

Where, as always, S ranges over names of sentences and p ranges over sentences in use.

One way that this explicit knowledge can be achieved is if the thinker in question understands an instance of S as naming a particular sentence, and understands what is named by S as representing it to be the case that p[103].

As I said above, any language has the power, or could be expanded to have the power, to name sentences and make claims about them. That is, human languages can represent things about themselves. They can also represent things about the world, and importantly can represent the way that they represent the world. I have also shown that it is a truth conditional theory of meaning for a language which represents the representational power of that language. However, a truth predicate is also a device of

103 There are more involved abilities which will also get the same result. For example one who knows that a name of S names S, and who knows that some other sentence, S*, represents it to be the case that p, and who knows that S is equivalent to S* also knows that S represents it to be the case that p. This more involved ability would be the ability of somebody who had learnt a second language.

semantic ascent. Use of a truth predicate represents which situation a sentence is about, and, when we have a transparent name of the sentence, it does so in a transparent manner. For example, the sentence, "poetry is an art form" is about poetry being an art form. The sentence, '"poetry is an art form" is true if and only if poetry is an art form' represents that in a transparent manner.

The upshot is that somebody who has grasped the point of a semantic truth predicate is somebody who has understood that sentences can be named and used to represent situations. If she has also grasped quote naming, then, for a sentence that admits of disquotation, she will be able to correctly represent what situation that sentence is about by forming a quote name of the sentence, concatenating it with a truth predicate and the bi-conditional, and then using the sentence to provide its own truth conditions. She will end up with something of the form:

S is true if and only if p.

Moreover, she will explicitly understand that S names a sentence, and explicitly understand that the sentence in question represents it to be the case that p. In other words she meets the explicit knowledge constraint.

There is nothing particularly special about disquotational contexts. It is just easier to formulate an example with a disquotational context. As long as somebody understands that a truth predicate can be used to represent the rationality of linguistic practice, then she can understand instances of the above schema as representing the rationality of linguistic practice. Grasping the point of a truth predicate which applies to names of sentences is sufficient to be able to understand instances of the truth schema as representing the truth conditions of sentences. For example, a speaker of English will understand '"I am happy" is true if and only if the purported speaker of the sentence is happy at the purported time of utterance' as correctly giving the truth conditions of the sentence "I am happy". She will grasp which situation "I am happy" represents.

On this view, truth becomes a semantic property. It evaluates correct representation. It applies to a sentence just in case the world is as the sentence represents it to be. A thinker gains explicit knowledge of meaning by coming to understand that sentences represent situations. She does that by seeing that a truth predicate functions as a value predicate which marks correct representation. But in recognising that truth is the value of a correct representation, not only does the thinker

have one more concept, namely the concept of truth, she also has the ability to understand a representation as a representation. As sentences are things in the world, she is also able to represent those sentences as having properties, and central among those properties will be the property of representing the world as being a particular way. So, in understanding representations she is able to understand representations which represent the representational power of sentences. These are sentences of the form: S is true if and only if p. In other words, she gains explicit knowledge of meaning. In addition, as she now understands what it is for S to be true, she understands what it would be for it to be true that p. But, this latter ability is in fact the ability to have explicit knowledge about how things might be in the world. So, if truth is a semantic predicate, we can explain both how somebody can gain explicit knowledge of meaning and how they can gain explicit knowledge at all.

The important moment is grasp of the point of a truth predicate. Truth is the springboard which catapults a person into explicit knowledge. Possessing a concept is a matter of being able to deploy that concept in thoughts. That is something that occurs at the ground floor. In other words, as I have been insisting all along, having a concept is not enough to give one explicit knowledge. So why is truth different? The answer is that truth is fundamentally a first level concept. It is a concept of a theory of meaning. In addition, it is the property proper to a correct representation. So, learning to deploy the concept of truth in thought is learning to deploy the concept of a correct representation. When one gets the concept of truth, on this view, one realises that a representation is correct if and only if things are as it represents them to be. The important point is that in thinking that, you gain the ability to have explicit thoughts about how things are. One can do that, because one can recognise a representation as a representation, and so explicitly represent a situation to oneself. That is a way of being at the first level.

However, although a truth predicate is fundamentally a predicate in a theory of truth, it can be used by speakers operating on the ground floor. Languages can and do contain their own metalanguage, and this allows competent reflective speakers to train novice speakers to respond appropriately. Of course, children are not usually taught by being introduced to a Taski style semantic apparatus. Instead, people say things like "that is wrong", "well done", "yes" and "no". But such talk does make implicit reference to truth. Importantly, what is being done is training somebody to speak. That is training

them to recognise and respond to the procedural reasons instituted by the rules of a linguistic practice. As part of that, and still at the ground floor, they will learn to use a truth predicate. But, it is the nature of language to be representational. As soon as they grasp the point of a truth predicate they make a semantic ascent. That semantic ascent allows them to understand that the sentences that they are operating are representations. More over, understanding a representation is grasping what it is a representation of, and so gaining explicit knowledge of meaning is gaining explicit knowledge of how things are in the world.

4.4 More on Representation

Before turning to a brief discussion on what we should say about mentality without language, I want to add a little bit more about representation. This is in part to assuage a worry that my picture is in fact another version of Millikan's. It is also to make clear what I think is involved in representation. Millikan holds that utterances of sentences represent, when they do, because they are functioning properly. For Millikan, to be a representation is to be an item that is about a particular situation and which is designed to be understood by allowing representation consumers to identify the situation which it is about. I objected that by making identification a blind causal process, Millikan could not properly make sense of our explicit knowledge. The problem was that the identification has to be understood either in terms of the practical ability to make new inferences, or in terms of the production of another representation which would, in turn, require interpreting. The former makes sense of implicit understanding, but not explicit understanding; the latter leads to regress.

Why is my understanding of representation different? On the face of it, it might look like I think that explicit knowledge of meaning is a matter of learning to identify the referents of sentences. However, this is not the case. What first level speakers have learnt is what truth means. The difference between my picture and Millikan's is that she has a sophisticated correspondence theory truth. I do not. I see truth as the property which organises linguistic practice. However, understanding that is understanding that sentences represent situations. But, because truth has its home has the key semantic

value understanding representation is not to be able to line up sentences with situations. Instead it is a matter of understanding how it is that sentences are about the world. The key thought here is that there is no easy step from a sentence to the world. Sentences do not share a form with the world nor are they correlated with situations in it. Instead, they are the sort of thing that is used to make a claim about the world, ask about the world, order that new things come about in the world and so on.

To present my positive proposal, I am going to follow Charles Travis, who in turn is following Frege. Travis points out that "In philosophy we typically think of a thought as the thought that such-and-such. But we can also think of it as a thought of a (given) way for things to be" (Travis, 2013, p. 237). The insight is that a thought has an inbuilt generality. But, it is that inbuilt generality that brings truth into play at all. As Travis writes:

> Frege explains a thought as what brings truth into question at all. Such is done only in bringing it into question in some determinate way, by raising, or speaking to, some particular question of truth—for example, the question whether Sid is eating peanuts. Now the idea is: whether a thought is true — what the answer is to the question of truth it raises —depends on how things are. But, the idea continues, in the nature of the case it cannot depend on everything in how things are.
>
> (Travis, 2013, p. 439)

The view is that the thought that Sid is eating peanuts represents a way the world might be. A way the world might be is always a range of configurations of what there is. Different thoughts might have different degrees of generality. The thought that Sid is eating peanuts is a fairly specific thought. It is less specific than the thought that Sid is eating dry roasted peanuts, and more specific than the thought that peanuts are being eaten. The specificity of a thought is a matter of how much it rules out. "Sid is eating dry roasted peanuts" rules out situations in which Sid is doing anything other than eating a specific type of peanut, the dry roasted ones. "Sid is eating peanuts" permits more situations; it is neutral as to the type of peanut preparation. "Peanuts are being eaten" is neutral as to what type of preparation has been used, and who and where the eating is going on. All of the thoughts are neutral as to the vast majority of things there are in the world. Sid's height, his relationship with his mother or how daintily peanuts are being consumed is irrelevant to the way these thoughts represent the world as being.

To grasp a thought is to understand that it is presenting a way for the world to be, and, understanding what it is to present a way for the world to be is to understand what range of situations are ruled out. And that, of course, is to understand the thought as a possible response to a particular question of truth. So, grasping a thought is understanding what it would be for the thought to be true. That in turn, is understanding what situations would be captured by that sort of generality. Here the crucial difference between my position and Millikan's arises; understanding what situations are ruled in or ruled out by a thought is an a priori matter. When somebody grasps the thought that Sid is eating peanuts, she knows, a priori, that the thought is true if and only if Sid is eating peanuts. But, this is simply because she knows how the world must be if it is to involve and instancing of Sid eating peanuts. It is to know how thought works.

It is time to depart from Travis. Travis presents the theory in terms of thoughts. I have already shown that we have no access to pre-linguistic access to such entities. Thoughts are the possible contents of acts of thinking. But, content is a dependent object. One understands content when one already has explicit knowledge of how things are. What Travis, following Frege, has to say about thoughts is true. However, sentences are more fundamental. What we understand when we come to explicit knowledge of a language is that sentences have the generality intrinsic to representations. We come to understand sentences as representing a way for the world to be. But, to understand sentences representing a way for the world to be is to understand generality, and that is to understand what it is for a generality to be instanced. Understanding what it is for a generality to be instanced is, in turn, grasping how the parts of sentences make a systematic contribution to the truth values of sentences in which they can occur. But, and this is Travis' insight, that is not to require sentences to share a form with the world or to be correlated with items in the world. It is to learn what it is for a sentence to be true. It is to recognise the function-argument structure inherent in sentences. It is to see that atomic sentences make claims about things in the world, the objects. Those sentences will either make claims about the properties of those objects or make claims about the relations in which those objects stand to each other. In both cases atomic sentences make claims about what is true of objects. Sentences involving truth functional connectives represent relations between ways the world might be. Understanding that is still understanding how the truth value of the whole sentence

depends on the truth value of its sentential parts. Of course, understanding these sentential parts requires understanding what it would be for the sentential parts to be instanced. Understanding generality is to recognise quantified statements as being a generality about generalities. So, to understand that somebody is eating peanuts is to understand that some specific but unspecified person is eating peanuts. The truth of the existentially qualified claim depends on there being at least some one way in which peanuts are eaten by a person. What you have to understand is a whole range of ways for it to be true that peanuts are eaten.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, as all sentences represent by being in some sense general, there is something fundamental in understanding quantification[104]. To understand a particular instance of quantification, you must recognise the structure inherent in a range atomic sentences. For example, understanding "somebody is eating peanuts" is to recognise a common form in sentences which represent a particular person as eating peanuts. That involves two abilities. The first is to isolate the subject term of the sentence, and the second is to isolate the predicate. But, because those abilities come with the ability to understand quantification, there is no need to make sense of that insight as a matter of being able to line up sub-sentential expressions with things in the world. Instead, you understand the idea of a way for a thing to be. The idea of a way for a thing to be is the idea of a property. In the example case, it is the idea of a thing eating peanuts, or, as Dummett might put it, of the property "ξ is eating peanuts". You do not have that ability without recognising that singular terms pick out the sorts of things that can eat peanuts, or, as Dummett might put it, 'fill in the gap marked by the "ξ"'. Having those abilities is understanding the predicates are true of objects. But, that is to understand that atomic sentences are about things in the world, objects, by saying things about them. You understand that when you know what it is for a sentence to be true. As Travis puts it:

> What a concept does it does *within* a thought. We can understand what it does only in terms of that notion of truth *simpliciter* whose first application is to whole thoughts. Objects *fall under* concepts: concepts are *true of* them. No *true of* without *true* full stop.
>
> (Travis, 2013, p. 251, italics original)

104 Both Dummett (Dummett, 1981, pp. 10-11) and Travis (Travis, 2013, p. 251), correctly in my view, attribute this insight to Frege.

Having these insights allows you to understand that the sentences you were already operating with were making claims about the world, ordering that the world be changed, asking about the world and so on. You no longer merely respond to those assertions, orders and questions in an intelligent manner. You now understand them for what they are, and that is to bring the world into view.

There is one further benefit to all this, and that is that you now have the resources to talk about your mental states. Gaining the ability to understand a representation does not magically make the content of your mental states an object of awareness. However, you will be able to recognise that the things that you hear and touch and smell are the same things that you talk about. You will also be able to recognise that the things that you encounter in the world and talk about are the same things that other people encounter in the world. So, in order to grasp the content of a mental state, either of your own or of others, you need to find a representation of what the mental state is about, and then learn a vocabulary for making a mental ascent. In English, one way that can be achieved is by using the locution "x thinks that". The important point is that having explicit knowledge that, for example, you think that Powell and Pressburger directed Black Narcissus comes from understanding the sentence, "Powell and Pressburger directed Black Narcissus" as asserting that just such a situation obtained. It is then to realise that you believe such a statement. That realisation is no more than the realisation that you accept the propriety of making just such an assertion. It is our grasp of the language that gives us our grasp of thought content. In other words, LPT is true.

§5 Thought Without Language

I take it that I have established the following:

LPT: Truth is, in the first instance, a substantial, evaluative property of sentences.

I take it that I have also shown that this means that our grasp on how things stand in the world requires us to understand a language. Moreover what we understand is a rational practice. However, the significance of performances in that practice is independent of

the purposes of practitioners. Reflective practitioners understand the linguistic significance of performances. That is to understand the meanings of the words and sentences they use. Because truth is the property which organises that practice, it is through understanding truth that practitioners come to reflective knowledge of meaning and of how things stand in the world. I also want to say something about the possibility of thought without language. In summary, my view is that there is thinking without language, but there is no belief without language. This is not an essential component of my view, but, nevertheless, I think it is true.

5.1 Explicit Knowledge is Different in Kind from Ground Floor Knowledge

What is an essential component of my view is that reflective knowledge of how things are is not the same thing as the sort of knowledge possessed by non-linguistic agents. There is a leap to be made to being a creature which has explicit knowledge. To understand truth is to understand both how language works and what it does. That cannot be grasped by a creature who is operating at the ground floor. This leap is reflected in the radical distinction between ground floor abilities and first level explicit knowledge. At the ground floor, one thinks by responding to reasons. That involves recognising and responding to features of the world. It is manifested by the ability to engage in practical reasoning. The reflective knower can do all of those things, but in addition she has explicit knowledge of what she does. This knowledge is not just an ability to respond to things. When Nathan utters "the cheese is in the fridge", he understands that his utterance is an assertion. That is, he recognises that being in the fridge is a spatial property which medium-sized dry (or wet) goods can have, and he is aware that cheese is the sort of thing of which spatial properties can be true. He further knows that "the cheese is in the fridge" represents a way for the world to be and is true if and only if the cheese is in the fridge. He also knows that "the cheese is in the fridge" has assertoric force, and thus claims to represent the world correctly. So, when Nathan has knowledge of the location of the cheese, Nathan, unlike the rat, grasps how things are in the world. When Nathan reflects on things, he knows that the content of his knowledge is the thought that there is cheese in the fridge. This does not, immediately, affect Nathan's ability to get round the world. Instead, it gives him reflective knowledge

of what he is up to. Ground floor ability, ground for knowledge, is the ability to respond to reasons. First level ability, first level knowledge, is the ability to understand representations as representations.

5.2 Concept Possession

One thing I can say is that non-linguistic creatures possess concepts. The view is that the ground floor creatures respond to the world. They do so by recognising features of the world that are salient for the completion of their projects. If a creature recognises a feature of the world then it has a concept of it. However, those concepts are confused and limited. The rat can distinguish cheese from chow. It has the concept of cheese and of chow. It is certainly no expert about either foodstuff. It takes them both to be nourishing, it takes one to be nicer than the other. It realises that they do not move under their own steam. It has no conception of their origin, or their chemical make up or anything beyond what it needs for its practical engagement with the world. Nevertheless, to understand the rat we need to attribute the concept of cheese and chow to the rat. But, those concepts are not different from our concepts of cheese and chow. In fact, they are not different from the concept of cheese and chow. However, Christopher Peacocke is right; there is no more to the concept of cheese or of chow than is required by an account of complete possession of that concept. He is also right that any account of complete possession requires an account of the range of propositional attitudes the full concept possessor can adopt (Peacocke, 1999, p. 5). So, what we need to account for the mentality of a rat, or any other minimally autonomous creature, is a bipartite truth-conditional theory of thought. In other words, we have to understand the rat as rational.

5.3 No Beliefs at the Ground Floor

Non-linguistic creatures think, but thinking at the ground floor is recognising and responding to reasons. As a result the mentality of a ground floor thinker has to be described by a bipartite truth-conditional theory of thought. I want to suggest that

ground floor thinking is not governed by truth norms. I also want to suggest that non-linguistic creatures do not have beliefs, because having beliefs requires procedural norms being in force. In summary, the view is that non-linguistic but minimally autonomous creatures think because they have a way of responding to the world that can only be understood in terms of the rational connections between their mental states. However, to have a belief, I will argue, requires taking on rational commitments, and that requires recognising procedural norms. To have a belief is not a mental act but a set of commitments that you take on. It is not something that can be done without linguistic abilities. The crucial assumption for the argument is that it is constitutive of belief that the grounds for adopting a belief are that it is true, and the consequences are commitment to what follows from the belief and to dropping beliefs incompatible with the new belief. If that thought is denied, the rest of the argument in this section fails. The failure of the argument of this section does not affect the main thesis that truth is a substantial evaluative property of sentences.

One worry might be that by insisting that truth is the grounds of a belief I am begging the question against those who think that non-linguistic belief is possible. The worry might be that creatures cannot take truth to be the grounds for a response to the world without the concept of truth or falsity. However, the concept of truth and falsehood are useful in describing the projects of a minimally autonomous creature. It seems plausible that a creature which is, for example, trying to get food and shelter needs to minimise its errors and to get some things right. If this is right, it does have a project, of secondary importance, of seeking some truths. It also has a project of shunning falsehoods, and hence can legitimately be credited with the practical projects of seeking some specific truths and shunning all falsehoods. However, I think this shows that seeking some truths and avoiding falsehood are necessary rather than sufficient conditions for being a believer. I am going to show that, in particular, the project of avoiding falsehood gives a non-linguistic creature pragmatic grounds for having a consistent take on the world, and plausibly underpins it seeking after some specific truths. I am also going to suggest that having projects does not commit an agent to anything.

It is not hard to show how the project of shunning falsehood leads to the attempt to adopt states which are true and an attempt at maintaining consistency. A creature that

is shunning falsehood tries only to adopt states which are true (assuming bivalence). It should drop states which are false. In other words, the grounds for adopting a state will be that it is true. That determination to shun falsehood also shows why the creature should drop what is incompatible with its new states. For any pair of contradictory thoughts at least one is false, so, if you are shunning falsehood, holding one to be true shows that you should not hold the other to be true. In other words, the consequences of adopting a state will be dropping what is incompatible with that state. However, those grounds and consequences are pragmatic grounds and consequences. The should here is a hypothetical should. The non-linguistic creature does not need to take truth to be a grounds for moving into a particular state, nor does it need to take its truth to require it to drop what is incompatible with the new state. What matters for recognising the creature as rational is that it behaves in accordance with these hypothetical shoulds. By and large, non-linguistic creatures do manage to behave in accordance with these shoulds. Although that behaviour is a byproduct of its ability to recognise and respond to features of the world as reasons for it to undertake particular courses of action, we cannot credit the creature with the concept of a reason.

So far, I have shown that having the project of shunning falsehood makes sense of a pragmatic commitment to believing only truths and to having consistent states. To show that pragmatic considerations are sufficient to account for the grounds and consequences characteristic of beliefs you would also need to show how pragmatic considerations could lead to a commitment to the consequences of your takings of the world. I think that there is no way that this can be done. The practical goal of avoiding falsehood does not seem to commit the agent to the consequences of what it thinks. If you do not draw any inferences, you never make any mistakes. We could make sense of a pragmatic commitment to what follows from your thinking only if you have a pragmatic commitment to expanding your knowledge. What we would need to make sense of is a pragmatic commitment to seeking out truth (rather than some particular truths). However, one cannot have the desire for truth without the concept of truth. You only need as much true information as gets you to your goal. If a rat takes it that there is cheese to the left, it follows that there is a specific type of cheese to the left. But, why would the rat have to be committed to there being a specific type of cheese to the left? It is no part of the rat's project to find a specific type of cheese, it can be completely

agnostic, from a practical point of view about the distinction between Cheddar and Wensleydale. From a pragmatic point of view we only need as much accurate information as will help us achieve our goals. All it requires is some conception of how it stands to the world, and to not be wildly wrong about how it understands the world to be. If I am right about belief requiring a commitment to the consequences of what you believe, the pragmatic requirements of having a project are not sufficient to bring with it pragmatic commitment to the consequences of how you take the world to be. Therefore, having projects is not sufficient to make you a believer.

An account of the mental aims to make sense of the way the world strikes a rational creature. Much of the work of building an account of the mental requires building a bipartite truth conditional theory of thought. Such a theory captures the mental role of the concepts a rational creature possesses. It does so by making sense of their contributions to the mental roles of thoughts in which they can occur. For the theory to contribute to making sense of the way the world strikes the thinker, the mental roles of concepts and thoughts need to be understood in terms of the way that truth organises the mental life of that creature. But, doing that requires seeing the mental roles of concepts and thoughts, not in terms of their standard, or even Normal, effects on what other propositional attitudes are adopted or dropped, but in terms of the grounds and consequences of adopting and dropping propositional attitudes. In other words, building a bipartite theory of thought requires making sense of the rationality of a thinker. Doing that is to make sense of what a creature does when it thinks in terms of what it ought to do. Of course, in order to do that, the creature must very rarely, at least, make inexplicable errors in the way it responds to the world. This is to say that the creature needs to more or less live up to the constitutive ideal of rationality. As a result, possession of such a theory puts the theorist in a position to make sense of the rational connections between thoughts. Indeed, because building such a theory requires making sense of the way the world strikes a rational creature, the theorist will have to expand our conception of both what there is and also of what is rational.

Non-linguistic creatures, like my exemplar rat, have no conception of the constitutive ideal of rationality. This is because they have no concept of truth. As a consequence, they cannot be aiming at truth. As a result, the rat, or other non-linguistic creature, does not do very well at giving up to the constitutive ideal of rationality. In

particular, although there is a sense in which it is rationally committed to drawing the whole set of inferences, many of those it will never make. The rat, being a pragmatic creature, never concerns itself with anything that goes beyond its own needs. It is only somebody who has an interest in truth who can ever go beyond her own immediate concerns to discover what her judgements commits her to.

This is not to say that the mental roles of the rat's thoughts and concepts are not, strictly speaking, what is captured by a bipartite theory of thought. Instead, it is to say that there is much about the mental roles of its thoughts and concepts that the rat will never come to understand. This is because attributing mental roles to thoughts and concepts is not done as part of the project of predicting what a thinker will do. Instead, it is done as part of the project of thinking about how the world strikes the thinker. It is an attempt to think about what features of the world a thinker can respond to, and the ways in which it can respond. If we want to use that as part of an explanation or prediction of the thinker's behaviour, we need to think about how well the thinker possesses its concepts. If there are things about cheese that the rat does not understand, then there will be things that the rat is unable to do that, from a rational perspective, it should do. The conceptual ability that we in fact attribute to the rat, will not be the ability of somebody who has complete possession of the concept of cheese. Nevertheless, it is precisely that concept that we do attribute to the rat. But, that concept is captured by describing the mental role of one who has the requisite abilities for complete possession of that concept[105].

105 There will be borderline cases. There will be some concepts that a non-linguistic creature has a good, but not complete, possession of. There will be many more where it will be difficult to say if the limited abilities of the creature are sufficient to attribute it possession at all. To pick two examples that were discussed above, I suspect that number and shape fall into this category. There are some things that Frege's dog can do that make us want to attribute a concept of number to it, but equally we will be hesitant about that attribution because, as Frege points out, dogs seem a long way from recognising what is in common between chasing one cat and fighting one dog. Similarly, it will work out what can fit into what, but it is not going to manifest any understanding of shape as an abstract object. This is not the most distressing problem. We can attribute proto-concepts to such creatures, and recognise that attributions of mental content will not, strictly speaking, capture just what it is that such a creature thinks. It also means that when we gain explicit knowledge, we put ourselves into a position to sharpen our conceptions of what there is and to have a whole new range of propositional attitudes.

Now, it might be thought that all that is required is to adopt the project of seeking out truth. But, I am not sure that we ever do adopt that project. There is much that we do not want to know about the world. Instead, I think that to have beliefs one needs to undertake the commitments characteristic of that belief. That is to recognise that there are grounds for thinking what you do and consequences of thinking what you do. Those grounds and consequences are determined by the concepts you are working with. But, those grounds and consequences are procedural grounds and consequences. It is to understand how adopting a stance to the world commits you to the world being a particular way. It seems reasonable to reserve the title "belief" for undertaking those rational commitments. It does not mean that one has to live one's life according to those rational commitments. It would probably make life extremely difficult if you did. All that matters is that you acknowledge that you have undertaken them. On this picture, belief is an attitude available only to reflective creatures – that is, to creatures who understand what rationality is. And, if I am right about the relative priority of language and thought, available only to language users. That is, available only to humans.

§6 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have finally vindicated the linguistic priority thesis. I showed that the activity of thinking, at least at the ground floor, could not be part of a rational practice. The problem is that it would require being guided by rules that were constitutive of mental content. However, guidance by a rule requires knowledge of the content of that rule. Trying to make sense of thinking as a rational practice thus leads to a vicious regress. I showed that Brandom's pragmatic phenomenalism was motivated by the same worry. However, his attempt to deal with it is radically pragmatic. He tries to show that there is no more than the attitude of taking a performance to be correct. I showed that this leads to the unspeakable and unthinkable conclusion that our utterances do not say anything and our thoughts have no content. I pointed out that there was no problem with taking part in a rational practice just so long as the existence of that practice instituted procedural reasons for unreflective practitioners to respond to. I then showed that the practice of using a language is organised by truth norms, and so gaining the concept of truth brings with it an understanding of how language works. But,

understanding how language works is understanding that sentences represent the world. That understanding brings with it the recognition that the sentences you had been operating with were representations of the world. Thus, grasp of truth not only brings with it an understanding of meaning, it brings the world into view. Having the world in view allows you to have explicit understanding of what your thoughts are about and to grasp what you are thinking. Finally, I suggested that having a belief requires acknowledging a set of rational commitments. This is an attitude only available to creatures who understand rationality. Hence, it is an attitude only available to creatures who understand truth. As a result belief is an attitude which is only available to language using humans.

The big result of the thesis is, of course, that truth is, in the first instance, a substantial, evaluative semantic property. It is the property which organises the practice of speaking a language. People come to understand the meaning of what they say when they come to understand the way that truth organises the practice that they were already taking part in. In coming to see that an assertion should be true or that an order should be made true, the infant speaker comes to see that the sentences she was already using are representations of how things might be in the world. By coming to see that a sentence presents a way for things to be, the infant speaker comes to have the ability to reflect on how things might be. She can ask herself questions about what follows from what, and so come to sharpen her grip on what there is. This is to come to be at home within the space of reasons. It is to begin to explore the sui generis ideal of rationality. Gaining explicit knowledge of language allows us to become active seekers after truth. We no longer merely have to be concerned with finding our way around the world, we can also ask: how are things in the world? In short, the infant has become a philosopher. A pleasant consequence of the thesis is that, just as language is proper to humans, so is philosophy.

Conclusion

I set out to investigate what it is to have an understanding of how things are. We, humans, express that understanding by using language. The understanding itself is a mental state. When we make a claim about how things are we express our understanding of a way the world might be. This is revealing of the fact that both propositional attitudes and uses of sentences are intentional items. They both have contents and are about ways for the world to be. One question that I wanted to answer, then, was: do we understand the content of sentences by reference to our understanding of the contents of our mental states, or do we understand the contents of our mental states by understanding linguistic descriptions of those states? In some sense, which has the whip hand, language or thought?

The answer I came to was that, in fact, our understanding of what we think comes via our our understanding of what we and other people say. The reason, in a nutshell, is that understanding both mental and sentential content requires understanding what it is for thoughts and sentences to be about ways for things to be. That understanding requires understanding how truth organises both language use and thinking. In particular, it is to understand how the incomplete items in the relevant activity, sub-sentential expressions and concepts, make a systematic difference to the truth values of sentences and thoughts in which they can occur, and to understand how the truth values of the complete items make a systematic difference to the ways those items are correctly used. However, thoughts are abstract objects to which our epistemic access is through linguistic representations of them. So, it is through understanding truth as a substantial, semantic, evaluative property that we come to our understanding of what there is and what it is to think about those things.

The Problem of Understanding Skilled Engagement

The thesis takes its point of departure from the thought that both using language

and thinking are rational activities. On this view, using language and thinking are fundamentally abilities that we have. When it comes to using language this is the ability to produce utterances that effect linguistic acts and to understand what other people are doing linguistically with their utterances. When it comes to thinking that is the ability to recognise and respond intelligently to features of the world. As theorists we need to be able to characterise those abilities. When it comes to language use, the question is: what is it to understand a language? When it comes to thinking, the question is: what is involved in understanding in general?

This leads straight in to the problem of explicit knowledge. It is a commonplace about abilities that those who possess them can exercise them without reflective understanding of what it is that they do when they are engaged in skilful activity. Understanding of a language or of anything else is no different. It is possible that you could skilfully and successfully produce and respond to uses of language without ever coming to realise that you were producing and responding to meaningful linguistic acts, let alone having an explicit understanding of what you and others were saying. It is not only possible but more than plausible that there are intelligent creatures which understand all sorts of things without having any awareness that they are recognising and responding to ways for things to be. These sorts of thinkers have implicit understanding of how things are in the world. What we need to make sense of is how we came to have reflective, explicit understanding.

This remains true whatever our view of thinking. When presented with cheese, the lab rat knows or believes that there is cheese in front of it. It has a mental state with a content. But, fundamentally, that is to have an ability. The big dispute here is over the right way of characterising that ability. In the deflationary corner, there are those who think that it has to be characterised in terms of the rat having a characteristic set of dispositions. In the inflationary corner, there are those who think that it has to be characterised in rational terms. In the former case, the rat's belief is, very roughly, treated as the disposition to eat the cheese when it is hungry. In the latter case, it is to judge that here be cheese. However, even if we treat judgement as sui generis and irreducible to a dispositional state, judging that here be cheese is not a matter of having a proposition, as it were, before your mind's eye and endorsing it. It is, rather, to deploy conceptual abilities in an act of judgement. It is to respond to the presence of cheese by

taking it to be true that that is how things are. It still remains to be explained how you come to be aware that this is what you have done.

So, what is involved in reflective, explicit understanding? The first thing to note is that someone who does have such understanding is aware that their uses of sentences and their propositional attitudes are about ways for things to be. Furthermore, they recognise of their sentences and their propositional attitudes what ways for things to be they are about. In other words, they understand the intentionality of uses of language and mental states. An intentional item is about some situation in the world, but not by simply being a response to it. To understand aboutness one needs to recognise that an intentional item can be evaluated. Different uses of sentences are intentional by presenting ways for the world to be, and different propositional attitudes are intentional by being attitudes towards ways for the world to be. To understand the intentionality of those items you need to understand how to evaluate those items. The simplest cases are assertions and beliefs. An assertion presents a way for the world to be and is correct if the world is as presented. Similarly, a belief is the upshot of taking the world to be a certain way, and so it is correct if the world is as has been taken. Other types of linguistic actions and other types of propositional attitude require more complex evaluation, but nevertheless it is in seeing them as evaluable with respect to how things are or might be that we are able to understand them as intentional. The key question, then, for the thesis is how much do we need to pack into this notion of evaluation to make sense of our coming to explicit understanding of meaning and mental content.

Language Use

Before we can come to settle the dispute about the relative priorities of language and thought, we need some account of the relevant activity. These activities are using a language and thinking. When it comes to using language what is wanted is something that makes sense of the systematic difference each expression in a language makes to the activity of using that language. In other words, we want a description of the semantic role of each sentence and each sub-sentential part in a language. Because, the activity proceeds by using sentences in different ways, the semantic role of sentences is

central to a description of the activity. The semantic roles of sub-sentential expressions are characterised in terms of the difference that they make to the semantic roles of sentences in which they can occur. The kinds of things that can be done with sentences are the making of linguistic acts, such as assertions, commands, questions. These are the different forces with which a sentence can be used. Those linguistic acts are different ways of using sentences. The grounds and consequences of using a sentence in those ways depends on the content of the sentence used. So, the semantic roles of sentences are determined, in part, by the kinds of things that can be done with sentences and, in part, by the contributions of the sub-sentential expressions to the contents of those sentences. Building a bipartite theory that shows how the contents of sentences affects the ways they are used and shows how each sub-sentential expression in a language contributes to the content of sentences in which it can occur will capture the semantic role of each item in that language. Because, on any view of truth, we have to be able to make sense of the, so-called, equivalence schema, Such a theory will be equivalent to a truth conditional theory.

However, it is not sufficient to build a bipartite theory, the theorist also needs some conception of what it models. The way to do that is to think about what is involved in understanding language use. Doing that requires making sense of what is done by different uses of language. That requires thinking about what is involved in understanding linguistic acts. But, as each type of linguistic act is a different way of presenting the content of a sentence, each type of linguistic act is a different way of presenting the truth of a sentence. So, for example, an assertion presents a sentence as true and a question asks if a sentence is true. It follows that someone who can speak a language knows the truth conditions of the sentences of that language and knows how the truth value of a sentence effects what can be done, linguistically, with that sentence. So, modelling linguistic competence requires taking a view as to the nature and home of truth.

Thinking

Thinking is also a rational activity. What we want from an account of the mental

is an understanding of that activity. As with language, we need a way of modelling how that activity proceeds. The activity proceeds by the adoption and dropping of propositional attitudes. I call the content of those propositional attitudes "thoughts". But, in order to make sense of the generality of thinking, we to need understand thoughts as composed out of concepts. This is to say, we need to understand acts of thinking as being the exercise of conceptual capacities in the formation of propositional attitudes. So, what is required is an account of the systematic difference made by thoughts and concepts to the activity of thinking. In other words, an account of the mental roles of thoughts and concepts. This part of an account of the mental is a theory of thought. Because the activity of thinking proceeds by the adoption and dropping of propositional attitudes the mental roles of thoughts are central to a theory of thought. The mental roles of thoughts are characterised by making sense of the way adopting attitudes with that thought as content affects the rest of the activity of thinking. To do that the theorist needs to characterise both the way the content of an attitude of a particular type determines the way in which that type of attitude makes a difference to the activity of thinking and how each concept makes a systematic difference to the contents of attitudes in which it can occur. So, what the theorist needs to do is build a bipartite theory that shows how each concept contributes to the thoughts which are the contents of propositional attitudes in which it can occur and how the difference made by attitudes of each type is determined by the thoughts which can be their contents. Again, because, on any view of truth, it is a device of ascent and denominalisation, such a theory will be equivalent to a truth conditional one.

Again the key question is: what is modelled by such a theory? We need to know what it is that someone can do when they are engaged in the activity of thinking. Again, different understandings of the activity will commit the theorist to different answers as to the question of the nature and home of truth. The big divide is between those who think that we can characterise the activity without appeal to truth and those who think that the activity needs to be characterised in rational terms. The former group try to understand the activity in terms of characteristic dispositions. That is, they understand both the possession of concepts and nature of propositional attitudes in terms of their functional role in the activity of thinking. They then have to make sense of of why those attitudes are attitudes towards anything. They have to face the question, 'why truth?' The

alternative is to make sense of the activity in terms of thinkers taking attitudes towards ways for things to be. So, instead of trying to explain and predict what a thinker does, the theorist must take a view as to what the thinker ought to do. Attributing concepts to a thinker is then a matter of understanding how different features of the world figure in the truth conditions of thoughts. Attributing attitudes to the thinker is a matter of understanding how the truth values of the subject's thought determine its rational commitments and entitlements. Another way of seeing the distinction is that the former group attempt a perspective neutral account of a mind, whereas the latter try to understand things from the point of view of the creature.

The Nature And Problem With Deflationary Theories

As I understand them, a deflationary theory is any theory that treats truth as no more than a device of ascent and denominalisation. On such views, some version of the equivalence schema captures all there is to the nature of truth. As a result, such views deny that truth could ever account for content. In particular, such views deny that what it is to understand language use or thinking can be, fundamentally, explained by understanding what it is for sentences or thoughts to be true. Instead, they must have some other account of what it is to understand a language or your thoughts.

Deflationary theorists need to provide some account of the meaning of words and sentences that appeal to the way they are used. So, what it is to understand a language is to be able to use words and sentences correctly. But, a speaker who knows that the sentence, S, is correctly used to talk about a particular situation, the situation described by using S, assuming that S means that p, is one who knows that S is true if and only if p. However, on a deflationary theory, that summarises, but does not explain, speaker knowledge. There must be some other account of what it is to understand the 'p's on the right-hand side. It cannot simply be knowledge of the meaning of S or any other sentence equivalent to S, because that is simply to be able to use S or some equivalent sentence correctly. So, deflationary theorists need to be mental priority theorists.

However, for the deflationary theorist, all understanding is a matter of having

the right sort of dispositions (or, on slightly more sophisticated versions, having your dispositions explained by some non-intentional relation to the p's). To have explicit knowledge the thinker needs to recognise that her propositional attitudes are about ways for the world to be. That requires more than the ability to update her attitudes as she gains more information about how things are. That is something she does at the ground floor. It requires understanding what it is for those propositional attitudes to be correct. Once again the problem is with the right-hand sides. Recognising that, say, a belief, B, is about some situation, it being the case that p, requires more than being able to update your belief with respect to the situation that p. You need to be able to evaluate your belief as correct if and only if p. That requires grasping the 'p's. If we are not to go back round in a circle, that is a matter of recognising that the content of B, the thought that p, is true if and only if p. However, on a deflationary view, such a claim describes what a thinker knows. It does not account for it. What the deflationary theorist gives us is a description of typical responses to situations. She does not explain how she came by the notion of a situation or of adopting an attitude towards it.

Designation Theories

Deflationary theories are unable to make sense of intentionality. There are a whole array of theories in the literature that treat intentionality as a substantial and irreducible property of sentences or thoughts. Amongst those theories are those that share with the deflationary theorist the view that truth is not explanatory of intentionality. I called such views "designation theories". The reason being that the fundamental relation is one of designation, either by parts to objects and properties or by wholes to facts. The neat thought on the former set of views is that the meaning of a truth bearer is simply its truth maker. However, falsehoods are just as meaningful as truths. As a consequence, there truth makers are just as real as the truth makers of true sentences. Indeed, they are real and of the same kind. The end result is that we cannot make sense of our preference for truth over falsity. In fact, we cannot make sense of an assertion as presenting as true. However, the recoil into treating the designation relation being between truth bearers and truth makers leaves no space for an account of how we

came to knowledge of what each truth-bearer designates. It makes a mystery of competent speakers' ability to evaluate their uses of language or acts of thinking with respect to their truth value. In other words, they do not end up with explicit knowledge.

Why we need a one task view of the mind

> the failure of designation and deflationary theories show that truth is a substantial property which accounts for intentionality.
>
> Truth as the property that we need to make sense of the perspective I think has on the world.
>
> We need to account for understanding in terms of idealising explanations that treat the thinker as trying to get things right as it recognises and responds to how things are.

The failure of designation and deflationary theories show that truth is the substantial property which accounts for intentionality. To come to explicit knowledge is to come to see how truth organises your mental life. In particular, it is to see that your judgement are aiming at truth. That requires understanding how your abilities to respond to features of the world make a systematic difference to the truth values of the thoughts that are the contents of your propositional attitudes. In other words, it is to understand that you have a perspective on the world, and start to come to some understanding of what that perspective is. It follows that the right way of thinking about thinking is in terms of the constitutive ideal of rationality. You make sense of yourself as a thinker by making sense of yourself as rational. Your understanding of the world deepens as you come to be able to recognise more features of the world, and, importantly, as you sharpen your conception of the grounds and consequences of making each judgement.

However, to come to that understanding is to come to recognise what it is for your thoughts to be true. It remains the case that a propositional attitude is a response to your awareness of something. In other words, propositional attitudes are things that are had. They are the states that a thinker moves into and out of as it recognises and responds to things in the world. The content of a mental state, a thought, is not then, in

the first instance, an object of awareness. It is an abstract object attributed, by the theorist, to a thinker to make sense of the way the world strikes that agent. This is not true of the meaning of sentences. Uses of sentences are recognisable as events in the world. You can be trained to use sentences correctly. Eventually, you can come to make sense of the way truth is organising language use. Doing that is to realise that the utterances people make are the uses of sentences and that those uses of sentences, along with speakers' responses to them, can be evaluated with respect to how things are in the world. You come to see what it is for the sentences that you, and others, use to be true. That is, to come to see what ways for the world to be sentences are about. Someone with that knowledge is then able to attribute mental states to themselves by attributing contentful propositional attitudes to themselves. They are able to understand those descriptions as making claims about what they think, and thus as capturing their perspective on the world. The big result is that reflective understanding of the world we live in and reflective understanding of thinking about it is a matter of understanding language. That understanding is philosophical understanding. And so, the philosophy of language is first philosophy.

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